



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



3 3433 07025088 5





OUR LITTLE LIFE

Essays

CONSOLATORY AND DOMESTIC

WITH SOME OTHERS

BY THE AUTHOR OF

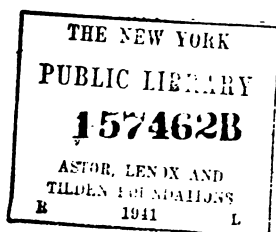
"THE RECREATIONS OF A COUNTRY PARSON," ETC.

New Edition.

LONDON
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

1882
MRS

Y F E
5022



Ballantyne Press
BALLANTYNE, HANSON AND CO.
EDINBURGH AND LONDON

Made and Printed in Great Britain



CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. OF LIFE: WHAT ALWAYS HANGS OVER IT	1
II. OF LIFE: WHAT IS ALWAYS PRESENT IN IT	11
III. OF LIFE: HOW SHALL WE TAKE ITS GREAT CHARACTERISTIC?	20
IV. OF LIFE: OF WORRY AS A MEANS OF GRACE	29
V. OF LIFE: THE DIVERSE MATERIAL GOD'S GRACE MUST WORK ON	38
VI. OF LIFE: OF A TRYING MEANS OF GRACE	48
VII. OF LIFE: WHEN THEY WENT AWAY . .	58
VIII. OF LIFE: BLINKS	68
IX. OF LIFE: HELPED BY LITTLE THINGS .	79
X. OF LIFE: STRICKEN	89
XI. OF LIFE: AFTER ALL THESE YEARS .	100

CHAPTER	PAGE
XII. OF LIFE : CRITICAL PERIODS AND NEW LEASES	114
XIII. OF PARTING COMPANY	126
XIV. LITTLE TO SHOW	146
XV. OF THE OPPOSITION	168
XVI. CONCERNING THE CHEERFULNESS OF THE OLD	194
XVII. LORD CAMPBELL	227
XVIII. OF MISTAKES : A CONSOLATORY ESSAY .	266
XIX. THE IDEAL OF A NATIONAL CHURCH : AN UNPRACTICAL IMAGINATION . . .	290
CONCLUSION	322



CHAPTER I.

OF LIFE.

WHAT ALWAYS HANGS OVER IT.



It is not because you feel that you and those who started with you have come a long, long way ; though the years behind you are growing many,—more than once seemed possible : It is not because you are getting tired ; though you sometimes feel just a little wearied in the greatness of the way : It is not because you are feeling less interested in your work ; for you may perhaps be able to thank God that your interest in it is always growing greater : It is not because you feel less fit for your work ; for both body and mind may still be serving faithfully, and you may be doing your work as well as ever, and possibly with less effort than in past years : It is not because of these things that the habit is growing upon you of holding the End in view, and thinking of it and of what lies beyond it. It is rather because

when you read the biographies of men who did good work in their day and generation, you remark how many of them lived no longer than you have already lived ; and how some of the greatest among them had a shorter time than yours ; that you are coming to feel the Great Change, and what is beyond it, looming bigger and more real : very often present to serious thought ; always latently more or less present ; as it did not use to be.

And thinking of this, do you not wish sometimes that there were more frankness between dear friends as to that change, and the manifold great changes which may come after it ? Not that you would talk of it to everybody ; any more than you would talk to everybody of your worldly concerns. But you know that it is pleasant to open your heart to a tried friend placed like yourself as to the work you both do : to have a talk with a tried friend of about the same worldly means as to how you both arrange your expenditure and manage to make the ends meet. You have found such interchange of confidence a great help and comfort, in days when these matters lay heavier than perhaps they do now. You will confess, readily, that it has sometimes been a very sensible relief, to be assured that though the pinch was sharp, yet nothing had come to you but what is common to other folk like you. Now I am coming to think that we might comfort and help each other if we were more outspoken in the way of comparing

thoughts and anticipations and feelings as to the great Conclusion which is always hanging over our life in this world. I mean, of course, that this should be done within right limits, not nourishing anything morbid either in thought or in feeling. I mean, of course, that this should be done only between those bound together by special affection and confidence.

Things are changing, as to such confidences : as to such exchange of thought. There was, years ago, the old conventional silence. That silence is broken now, so far. An old lady once told me how when she was a girl, staying in the house of her uncle, a sweet little cousin, a little girl of ten years, died. It was an awful blow to all the little circle out of which the bright face and figure went. But, after the funeral, the uncle, the head of the household, said, "Now, remember, Mary's name is never to be mentioned again:" and it was not. The familiar name died out of the current speech of the family: it ceased to be a household word. The idea was that death was a horrible thing, which must not be alluded to. The idea was, too, that as for the departed, the sooner they were forgotten, the faster you would get over the blow of their removal. Possibly, with some, this was so. The name was forgot: the features grew indistinct in remembrance: and out of sight was out of mind. Certainly, with others, this peculiar treatment would not be successful. You remember the famous phrase, *Conspicuous by Absence*. The name

that must never be mentioned was all the more constantly in the memory. The thoughtful little boy or girl would get away alone to some quiet place, and sit down, thinking, thinking. The looks came back, the tones came back, the soft cheek and the solemn eyes: and you cast yourself down upon the earth in an agony of tears. It went, no doubt, that first overwhelming anguish: in some kind of way you had to face your life and work again. But let no one dream that by commanding that a thing be not spoken of, you make sure it shall not be thought of. Anything but that. You have been told how, in one of the last years of Dickens, a certain man, one of the scores of thousands whom he had made kinder and better, wished to give him some grateful gift: and gave a beautiful piece of plate to stand on his dinner-table. It was to have represented the *Four Seasons*. But the giver said, "I could not bear to offer him the bleak and cold one." And so there were but the three figures, the types of Hope, Beauty, Bounty. The great genius was touched, and he received the gift thankfully. But he said, more than once or twice, "I never look at it but I think most of the winter."

And while it serves no good end, in any way, to keep this entire silence: while it has now come to be, in many homes, that those who have gone are spoken of familiarly and continually: I think that even yet there is a needless reticence, in the con-

fidential talk of those very dear, concerning what lies before each. For there is not here the pudency which makes one keep silence as to one's personal religious feelings and emotions, even one's religious convictions, in all ordinary cases. For divers reasons, that silence is good. It is a fact, that it comes of the very make of the very best of the Race ; without reason formally assigned. But there are reasons. You may talk away reality. Such talk tends to egotistic conceit : to self-consciousness : to self-puffery : to insincerity. All confessionals are commonly bad, save between the soul and Christ. But why, between those who understand each other, and trust each other, and love each other, and are continually together ;—who talk frankly of all worldly plans, hopes, and fears ;—why this strange reticence concerning what must needs be often thought of : concerning what it can do no harm to speak of freely : concerning what it may greatly help and comfort, to speak of, freely ? Why is so little said of the Outlook : why is that little so general, so vague ?

Indeed, it is so. “Father, we'll meet again :” that was all that a lad I knew well said as he was going. It was all he had ever said. “Will you gi'e me a bit kiss ?” was all a poor young labouring man, by whose bed I was waiting, within an hour of the end, said as farewell to his little boy. Then he closed his eyes, and the tears ran down his cheek : but he said no more. In the memoir of that most

lovable man, the late Bishop Ewing of Argyll, you may read some account of the departure of his wife. The lives of husband and wife had been bound together in one. Yet she left a mark in her *Christian Year*, wishing thus to let her husband and children know what her feelings were. And her last words were to her husband and her daughter, "We shall all meet in a better place." You would not speak thus vaguely of all being together in Perthshire : why in Heaven ? Before this she had sent for little Sam, and made him say, "The Lord's my Shepherd : " and as he said the last lines, dear to every Scotch heart, she kissed him, and without a word made a sign that he might go. The little boy, if he is living, must be a man now. For his mother's sake, I say, God bless him. I do not know any mortal to whom I feel kinder, this moment, than to that unknown little boy. "I think," wrote her husband, "she did not feel the pangs of parting so much as we did ; but we cannot tell." More touching words were never written ; and true.

No doubt, at the last, the faculties are numbed. You will be too weak and weary to say much. You know this well, if you have already been brought very low. But you will know, too, if you have been brought to the Threshold, and then allowed to come back to work for a while, how much you wished to say ; and to arrange : what a sense there was that it had come so hurriedly : you fancied you would have had longer time to think of it, to make up your mind

to it, to resign yourself to leave hold of everything here, and to face what is behind the Veil. Surely we ought many times to think of all this, and speak of it, calmly, as a thing sure to come; when all is well with us, when there is no hurry, when there is time to arrange our thoughts, when immemorial days of common life are passing over us, when we are *free from pain*. And I think this is coming: greater frankness between the dearest, between dear friends a little farther off, as to the Outlook. Yes, even beyond the grave.

You know how fully and frequently you talk to your boy, going away from home, of all he is going to. You speak of every little detail: you try to see it all clearly. It will comfort him some little, when far away, among strangers, finding out for himself the strange possibilities of human experience, to think, "We have talked over all this. It is what we expected,—or it is not,"—as the case may be. You picture out the journey, each small particular: you repeat again and again every bit of information and counsel which may be of use. Who does not understand it all?

It would smooth our way if there were more of this, concerning solemn things coming to us all. It would lighten the solitary burden we sometimes bear. It goes without saying, that we should keep away, carefully, from all morbid broodings. For it is God's plain intention that often, and for long times together,

the thought of what is coming should be no more than latently present with us, amid our hard work and worry. But sometimes it should be plainly spoken of, as other serious possibilities in our life are plainly spoken of. Let it be spoken of calmly, and when we are in our best mood for thinking of serious things. It is wrong, surely, to train ourselves to this : that our attitude towards anything God has appointed us should be, "I will not allow myself even to think of that : I will not have it spoken of." The thing *must be faced* : and it will be faced more easily if it do not come as something quite unnamed in our ordinary talk. The voice may break, and fail, as you try to say, "Now, one of us will see the other dying ; will see the other dead." And when it comes, it will be very strange : words are vain to tell what it will be. But we are, all of us, too much alone in some of our most serious thoughts and anticipations. By our make, we must needs be alone so far ; but we make it too far. We think of many things of which we talk to none : not one. As for varying moods, the soul's cloud and sunshine, it is probably better that we keep these to ourselves. But let there not be this dead silence between Christian folk and their nearest as to what must come ; what is hanging over us day by day. And I do not mean merely the change itself : I mean what lies beyond it. We have kept close together, here, in this stage, in this mortal life. We should not care for any future life if we were not with

those who were with us here : and we never will forget, anywhere, or in any time, our life here ; what we did and cared for, where we lived ; no matter how God may educate and form us in places and times as yet unknown. We will keep together in sympathy as to the last things : in the anticipation of them : in the preparation for them : in some humble comparison of our experience in the respect of our fitness for them.

Yet, when all is done and said, one thinks of Pascal : *I shall die alone !* But there is One who can still be with us (O for more faith !) when every other fades from our sight and sense, and we must go on by ourselves. How diversely good Christians picture what shall be entered on then ! “How busy he will be,” was the reflection of those who sat the evening he died round the mortal part of Sir David Brewster, speaking of that in him which had gone. “She’s at rest,” was said to me by one of the best of men, as the tight look went from his daughter’s worn face, and the last breath went, and she suddenly looked younger than for years. One thing is sure : just one : Christ is there. It is to depart and be with Him.

As good Bishop Ewing wrote to his daughter :

“One day we must all go away from one another, —you from me, I from you. Remember, my dearest child, that whoever may go first, God is better, really better, than we are : and that we go to God, and

shall find one another, and all whom we love, ever and always, in Him."

It was a stern man, and a keen, not easily touched, and not outspoken (his name was John Gibson Lockhart), who, thinking of such things, wrote :

"That creed I still will keep :
That hope will not forego :
Eternal be the sleep,
Unless to waken so."

To which I say, Amen. Amen.



CHAPTER II.

OF LIFE.

WHAT IS ALWAYS PRESENT IN IT.



THE great characteristic of Modern Life is Worry.

It is rather more than twenty-one years since I first read that sentence. I see again the two handsome Volumes, fresh from the Publisher, sent by the Author. I see the thick, cream-laid leaves, as I cut them. I am aware of the pleasant fragrance of a new book, dear to some as the smell of hawthorn blossom. I catch my first view of the large clear print. And the short sentence which (as befits its importance) was likewise an entire paragraph looks me in the face as it did then.

The writer of it was Arthur Helps ; a wise, sweet-natured, good man. His books are wise, kindly, charming : but he was better than his books. I see

the beautiful face, sad, humorous, thoughtful, anxious. He was the best and most lovable man I ever knew.

"The great characteristic of Modern Life is Worry." There is something in temperament: something in surroundings: and peaceful seasons come (God be thanked!) in the life of most. But the statement is true to the experience of most. It was true to the experience of the man who made it. I think I may say it is true to yours, my friendly reader, though I never saw you and never may. Just once, a few years ago, a worthy mortal who is now far from worldly trouble said to the writer, that he "preached too much about Worry." I looked in the worthy mortal's face. It was worn and lined with care, which had spoiled his nerves and his temper as well as lined his face: and a little before he had told me that certain vexations in his lot were breaking his heart. "Is there more of Worry in my preaching than in your lot?" was all my answer: and the good old man shook his white head and said no more. Not but what he retained his opinion. For there used to be folk who thought that there was something wrong about sermons which treated of realities in their homes and hearts, and which (in fact) they could understand and feel to be true. And the right sermons were those which dealt with mysteries which neither preacher nor hearer could comprehend, and which had no bearing on actual life and well-doing.

You know what Worry is. It is a little thing,

sometimes a very little thing : but it is a continual thing. And you have found that a load which is not in fact very heavy grows very heavy to one's feeling if you have to carry it a long way ; if you can never lay it down. When our experience of life is short, we think to ourselves that we are much worried now, but that the circumstances are exceptional : all this will blow over ; and days will come in which there shall be no little cross-accidents, irritations, disappointments. But you learn, as you go on, that as it is the unexpected that mostly happens, so it is the exceptional that generally abides. In cheerful moods, when bodily and mental health is high, you smile at *Worry* and make little of it : you cannot imagine how you let it worry you so much. In desponding moods, when you have run down, when the constant work which keeps you on your feet has ceased for a too brief blink of rest, when you are weak in body and soul, you break down under *Worry* : you burst out into the cry that you cannot stand this any longer. For perhaps as many poor human beings wish (like *Elijah*) that they were at rest, under multitudinous and ceaseless *Worry*, as under single great and overwhelming trials.

Worry is a little thing, it was said. You do not call it *Worry* when death is in the house : when some dear member of the little household must go far away : when sickness and pain lie heavily on yourself, and all your worldly work is laid aside and most

of it quite forgotten : when you are thinking anxiously of the future of your children : when the awful sorrow comes of one of them choosing evil and not good. God forbid this last bitterness should be sent to any reader of this page ! Yet every Black Sheep was once somebody's dear little boy. These are things which rise high above the mark of that which we call Worry. But it is worry when the post fails to bring the letter you had specially looked for, and counted on without a foreboding of failure. It is worry when some stupid servant spills a pan of burning coals (which should never have been there) on a carpet which is irreplaceable and which has grown into a remembrancer of the *Auld Lang Syne*. It is worry when a friend borrows a handsomely-bound book, and after long delay restores it with the binding scratched and several of the leaves loosened : It is worry when the friend never returns the book at all, but lends it to somebody else, who lends it to another, who passes it still farther on, till it enters into the unknown, and returns to you no more. I know few things more worrying than the carelessness and dishonesty of many folk as to books : and I take this opportunity of stating that I never will lend a book to any mortal (with just two exceptions) any more. It is worry when your horse falls lame just when he is specially needed : when your water-supply fails just as the house is to be filled with guests : when some ill-set and thick-skinned person persists in harping upon a

disagreeable subject, or repeating to you some unfriendly remark which was never intended for your ear. This last, it may be remarked in passing, can be stopped; and ought always to be stopped with a firm hand. Then, Stupidity is a great fact, and factor, in human life: sometimes one thinks there comes an Epidemic of it, during which nearly everybody misunderstands what is said, goes and waits at the wrong place at the wrong hour, conveys a message exactly the opposite of that given him to deliver, keeps in his pocket for a week the letter given him to post. Let it be repeated here (it was said elsewhere), He who posts his own letters is possibly a good man, but certainly a wise one. Now, in the course of Providence, the punishment (in inconvenience or absolute suffering) which follows a stupid mistake, is many times very heavy and sharp; more so than in the case of a moral offence: and the sting which is felt through all a sensitive nature in such a case is Vital and Essential Worry.

Do you think I am handling my subject lightly? You are mistaken, my friend, if you do. Do you think I am treating it ill-naturedly? In that case you are mistaken too.

Now, Worry is disagreeable. It is a thing you don't like. And, roughly speaking, everything you don't like is a temptation. I recall, vividly, over many days, the true saying of a very little girl: "I'm always good when I am amused." The saying sets

forth a large and serious truth. Now (1) Anything you don't like tends to make you bad : and (2) Whatever tends to make you bad is a temptation. Well, Worry tends to make you snappish ; discontented ; irritable ; hasty of speech to servants and to children ; disagreeable to any poor visitor who comes with a long story of trouble and looks for sympathy and help. Worry tends to make you chafe at the arrangements of the Disposing Hand above you : It is all pushing in the direction of *Curse God and die*. You know it is. I therefore say that Worry does not directly tend to make you good, but rather bad. If we are to do anything that is pointed at by the serious counsel *Grow in grace*, we must resist the primary tendencies of Worry. We must counterwork them : evade them : somehow get the better of them. All this is one step in what I wish to say to you, unknown friend.

Here is another step. God sends us all such a deal of Worry : God so plainly intends each of us to have so much Worry : Worry goes so much to form, in this life, the character into which we are growing, and which we must take with us when we go into the unseen world : that any one who really can trust God (and this means can trust our Blessed Redeemer, can trust JESUS CHRIST) would feel perfectly sure that there must be a way of taking worry rightly, so that it shall do us good and not harm. Worry, rightly taken, should train to quietness,

humility, patience, gentleness, sympathy. It ought not to eventuate (though it naturally does) in making others suffer because we are uncomfortable: in making us a source of painful worry to others because we are worried ourselves.

Now for my next step. The good qualities we attain in best measure are exactly the good qualities to whose opposite bad qualities we had naturally the strongest tendency.

The most fluent speaker I almost ever listened to (I heard him times innumerable: he became Lord Chancellor) was in his early manhood a stammerer who could not say a sentence without being pulled up. But he set himself to fight against the infirmity (*This one thing I do*): and he became literally *more than conqueror*. He not merely corrected the fault: he attained the opposite excellence.

By God's grace: by hard work: by long perseverance: by many prayers: by *attending carefully to every little physical and spiritual help*: each of us Christian folk may really do as concerns all our faults and failings that which Lord Chancellor Truro did as concerned his infirmity of speech. We may grow strongest where we had been weakest. We may put down the fault and gain the opposite excellence. If we were hasty-tempered, we may grow conspicuously patient and forbearing. If we were very easily worried, we may attain a placidity marvellous to ourselves. I will admit that the tendency to be easily worried

found so much on our bodily constitution, on the framework of our nerves, on the quickness of our brain (all of which not even the Holy Spirit can reach directly, nor tries to reach directly), that God's grace has in some a vast deal to do in the way of spiritual strengthening (the Psalm says "strengthenedst me with strength *in my soul*"), before the physical temptation and hindrance can be faced with any kind of success. But then God's grace is able to do a vast deal. Its power is limitless: or (if you will be precise) limited only by the need for it. The sweetest-tempered and gentlest human beings I have ever known were such as had bad tempers naturally. But they took the temptation in hand and mastered it. The most resigned and cheerful workers in a humble sphere have been those who once had more than the ordinary share of ambitious stirrings and desire for fame. But they tried after something better, and they attained it. I have even known a man whose face flushed up to fury, and who howled inarticulately, when you praised excellence in any mortal but himself, partially cured. He never quite left off frantically seeking to put a spoke in the wheel of any acquaintance, it must be confessed. Nor have I remarked that ingrained insincerity was ever quite cured. But when the insincere man did not try to be cured. He had found that Dishonesty was the best Policy: at least, that it did very well as concerns this world. Unscrupulous pushing and self-seeking, combined

with judicious trimming, often gain considerable worldly advantages. And though the truthful man would not have them at the price, one has known such somewhat embittered by facts which he had come to know. But I put all this aside, meanwhile. I have something to say about it, elsewhere. It ought to be said : and it shall be.

What I wish to say now is, that we must take *Worry* in hand, with determination. And this is just what in fact we fail to do. There are many folk who will pray earnestly for God's grace, and put their whole moral nature upon the stretch, in the matter of what they think greater duties and greater temptations, who, as for *Worry* and its tendencies and forming influences, let themselves slide : and this does them the greatest harm. It is the besetting sin that we are specially bound to resist. It is the atmosphere we are breathing hour by hour that it most concerns us to see to that it be healthful. And the moral atmosphere in which most professed Christians of middle age must needs live in this Nineteenth Century, is the atmosphere of *Worry*. The sins which do most easily beset most professed Christians in these days are the sins to which *Worry* is the great temptation.

You agree with me, I think, that if we are not spiritually to deteriorate, between each two Christ-mases, probably each month, we must quite resolutely take *Worry* in hand. And my next step is to ask, *How?*



CHAPTER III.

OF LIFE.

HOW SHALL WE TAKE ITS GREAT CHARACTERISTIC ?

TO begin with, Seriously. Seriously ; and quite resolutely.

It will not do, to let ourselves slide. It will not do, to fretfully moan that our temper is getting spoiled, our views jaundiced, our whole nature soured : to declare that we were far more amiable, cheerful, hopeful, trustful, ten years ago ; but that our burden has been too heavy for us. It will not do, to take for granted, in a vague general way, that all this moral and spiritual deterioration, all this sorrowful coming downhill, is somebody else's fault, or is nobody's fault, or comes of circumstances and surroundings. No doubt, if you, toiling, anxious man, had been given a more managing wife : If you, diligent housewife, had been given an energetic, helpful husband : it would have been far easier to be good, or to *seem* good, than it is now. More of this by and by. But we must not just yield to the

evil tendencies and influences of our worldly condition. Put this in other words, and it turns to a truism.

We must resist temptation, and not yield to it. I have known good folk who, as concerns their worldly lot and its trials of temper and heart, seemed to have utterly forgot this primary truth. If you go where temptation pushes you, there is no doubt where you will go. You will go downhill. You will go to the Bad, in temper, in character, in mood. You will always grow more disagreeable, and more unhappy. I use worldly words, of purpose: they express the fact. But it is just as sober fact I express, when I say in other words, *You will always be getting farther from Christ.* Now this concerns every mortal who will ever read this page; and me who write it. Don't fancy that I am writing for outside sinners, worse than myself. We are going to try, please God, to help each other. We all need it sorely. Sorely.

We must fight the Natural Tendency of Worry. We must resist Worry: not its coming (it is sure to come), but what it tends to make us when it comes. We must circumvent it, and counterwork it, wisely. There are two ways of resisting any influence or pressure upon us. One is, to go straight against it. The other is, to turn its flank, to counterwork it. You know the different ways in which a steam-ship and a sailing-ship vanquish a contrary wind. The steam-ship goes right up against the contrary wind: defies it. The sailing-ship sets her sails so skilfully, and

tacks so skilfully, that she makes the contrary wind (in the long run) bear her in just the opposite direction from that in which the wind was pushing her. Now, worry is (morally) a contrary wind. Now and then, we may be enabled bravely to make head against it. More frequently, by skilful management, and by God's grace, we shall be enabled to make worry give us spiritual help: beat up against it by tacking: get an influence, naturally pushing us away from Christ, into a cold region of discontent, fretfulness, and all evil tempers, to drive us nearer to Christ, into a region of humbleness, resignation, weanedness from this world, kindly sympathy. Ay, by the help of the Blessed Spirit; and by continual watching and managing, and putting our moral nature on the stretch; finally, let it be said, by continual prayer: we shall *turn Worry into a Means of Grace*. And grander thing never was done by poor human being. It is terribly difficult. But it can be done. I have known people, men and women, who had done it. And I thought of *more than conquerors!* For the sublime words of our English New Testament were literally true. I know the Greek, small scholar, and what has been said of it. But I will not give up the translation as it stands.

"If we are not spiritually to deteriorate, between each two Christmases, probably each month, we must quite resolutely take Worry in hand. And my next step is to ask, How?"

My last little essay closed with these words.

Now, if we are really anxious, for our own practical guidance, to get an answer to a question, it is very discouraging if the answer proves very long, and very roundabout ; and if (in fact) we get no direct answer to the question at all. That shall not happen here, be sure. Therefore, though I have a great deal to say before I am done, concerning the Christian treatment of worry ; and though I cannot say it all very shortly and don't want to do so ; yet (all the more because these chapters must be short) I wish to give you at once a brief view of what I am going to say at greater length. I will show you the line of country over which I hope to take you, by and by, in leisurely saunter, but seriously too. Serious need not mean dull.

How, then, are we to take Worry in hand ?

I. *Reason with Worry.* When some vexatious thing happens, try to get it in the right point of view. Then you may see that you have less reason to complain than you had fancied : perhaps that you have no reason at all. There is a way of putting things, which makes them look quite different. There was a man, eminent in his vocation, who, through that which we call *Ill-Luck* (there is no such thing) failed to obtain its rewards. God kept him back from honour. Perhaps it would have turned his head. When an unwise friend once lamented to him that he had not been so successful as Tom,

Dick, and Harry, though he had deserved success far more, he said, good-naturedly, "Well, I would rather people should wonder why I did not get that little decoration than why I did." Another man in the same vocation, with much less reason to complain, went about bitterly bewailing his ill-luck, and severely commenting on the deficiencies of luckier men. I never spoke to that man but once; yet on that solitary occasion he did all that to me. If you could, by remotest possibility, imagine who he was, and where he was placed, I should not say this. If any reader fancies he knows what I am referring to, I tell him he is mistaken. But you see what I mean by *Reasoning with Worry*. Talk with some folk, and you find they have got all their little troubles in the aspect in which they look ugliest: like one of those gutta-percha faces which were common a few years since squeezed into its most hideous grin. It may take time to get a worry in the right and healthy aspect. You may have a sleepless night: a fractious forenoon. Twenty-four hours: three days: a week even. And for any sake don't go brooding upon it till you make it worse. Reason with it to the end of making it look better; not worse.

II. *Work against Worry*. I mean, keep yourself healthily busy at worthy work. Many folk are more worried than they need be, because they are idle. They have too much time to think of little things better forgot. Luther was a man easily worried. Be

sure, he was very much worried about something when he said, "I rush out among my pigs, rather than sit still." And you will pardon the homeliness of the Spanish proverb for the sake of its practical good sense, and for the help it will give you: "The dog that is hunting does not feel the insects." He has something else to think of. His attention is diverted. So be it with you, good friend, who have your cares. Don't sit and brood over them. Go and work hard. It will be against the grain to begin: but in a quarter of an hour you will be in full train: and little irritations mainly forgot.

III. *See carefully to your bodily health.* Not of expediency, but as matter of Christian duty. You are just as much bound to make the best of your health, as of any other talent God has given you. We are done with that old idiocy, that you could help the soul by harming the body. Of course, rigorous Temperance in all things is, when you have reached middle age, the great secret of bodily health. Specially beware of all those things (men call them Stimulants) which lift you up for a little and then drop you a good deal lower than they found you. Dyspepsia and nerve-weariness make little worries lie heavy, which when in good health you would put aside with a smile. A great secret of cheerfulness, amiability, goodness, is health. High health has been able to keep very bad folk cheerful. The Borgias were an infamous crew. But they enjoyed

such magnificent health, that they were always cheerful and good-natured. More was the pity. For sometimes really good people, in miserable health, are very fractious and disagreeable. One has known an eminent theologian, a sincere good man, who in his household was as a sort of negative Sun, diffusing darkness instead of light.

IV. *Pray over Worry.* This habitually. After all, Worry is the great discipline which is forming your character. It is making you, here, what you are like to be for ever. And I suppose you believe we are in God's School. "It is all Education, it is not Punishment:" one of the saintliest of men said that to me of all worldly troubles, greater and less. But it depends on how we take them. And we are not able, without help, to take them rightly. Now, let us take all our worries to Christ. It will make Prayer a very real and continual thing, if we pray for the things we really want: if we tell our Saviour (Who knows already) what is really in our heart, not what we think ought to be. Get rid of the heathenish notion, that there are troubles, and temptations, too little to trouble Christ with. Anything that is big enough to interest you, will interest Him. Of course, there are things to be kept for the closet, alone with Him. We should not like anybody, but Him, to know what little things worry us: to know exactly what we are thinking of, and anxious about, many times. But we have no secrets from

Him. And if we go and tell Him all that is in our heart (the telling of it may often be that which we call Confession of Sinfulness or Weakness) : and ask Him to pity us, strengthen us, advise us, see us through it all, give us the Holy Spirit to make it do us good and not harm : I would much sooner believe that Black is White than that He would send us away none the better. That is, in His own time. "It may not be my time : it may not be thy time : But yet in His own time : the Lord will provide." So much is sure. There is much to be said here ; but not now. For we must cease. One word yet :

V. *Bear Worry.* Bear it patiently. Ask help to bear it patiently. You know how often people try to say something with a smile, that comes from a bleeding heart. So it was that Charles Kingsley wrote to a dear friend of the trials of his lot. "It's all Toko," he said, "and you'll not be good for much without Toko." *Toko* is a school-boy term, extremely familiar south of the Tweed ; and it conveys the idea of Disciplinary Suffering. In graver words, ST. PAUL had said just the same thing : "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Ay me ! Young preachers write on that text, little knowing the awful thing they are writing about. Now, you must bear worry as long as God thinks right : you must dree your weird. Don't fancy you will certainly get rid of it by prayer. You may : but likelier, you will *get the good of it*. It will stay : and

be very trying : but it will do you good if you struggle hard and pray often. God will no more take away mental pain because you ask Him, than He will take away bodily pain. I know (God be thanked) mental pain is such in its nature, that at the throne of grace, casting yourself on God with the *Fiat Voluntas Tua*, the burden may quite fall off; while the Fever or the Inflammation which has the body in its grip must run its course, for all prayer. We do not look for physical miracles now. But do not be surprised if God lets you bear the pain of Worry for a while : a long while.

Thus, reader, you have, shortly, what I desire to say. But abridgments lose a great deal. And though the exigencies of the fashion in which I speak to you make me give you this, I want your company a good while longer.



CHAPTER IV.

OF LIFE.

OF WORRY AS A MEANS OF GRACE.



SAID, a little ago, that though Worry is naturally a temptation, we might so take it in hand that it should prove just the opposite of a temptation : to wit, a *Means of Grace*. And my last essay was given to sketching out, in a general way, the manner in which we ought to take Worry in hand that it may help us and not hinder us. We are going on to have some further talk as to the details of the manner in which this is to be done. One feels that here is a case in which the details are everything. And these pages are meant *to help* you who read them. I shall not have done what I desire if I only get you to read them with interest, and then put them aside and think no more of them. There are pages which have done their work when they lighten a

half-born. But if these do no more than that, they are a dismal failure.

We are going into details. But before we begin, there is something (in the nature of a large principle) which needs to be said. And here is the place to say it. Unless we take it with us, we shall make a great, all-pervading mistake. And we shall not get the good desired.

"By the help of the Blessed Spirit: by continual watching, and managing, and putting our moral nature on the stretch: finally let it be said, by continual prayer; we shall turn Worry into a Means of Grace."

The last little chapter contained these words. We must be sure of the meaning of the words.

What is a *Means of Grace*? Something that makes grace in us grow stronger.

This is quite self-evident. Yet if we kept it with us, it would greatly change our ways of thinking and talking about the Means of Grace.

For sometimes we call a thing a means of grace, not because it makes grace in us stronger, but because it enables us to get on comfortably and to be pleased with our religious state, when grace is in fact very weak in us.

Think of your bodily strength. A thing may be truly said to strengthen us, if when we are weak it makes us stronger. Change of air, tonics, nourishing food, sufficient exercise, are means of strength. But to lie in bed, which keeps us unaware how weak we

are ; which enables us to fancy ourselves strong when our head would whirl and our limbs tremble if we got up ; is not a means of strength. It is a means of self-deception. It is something to help us to fancy ourselves strong when in fact we are weak.

This is a lovely morning, one of the first of September : and this is a beautiful country. The farmers are having the first fine harvest for a good many years : and all about here one sees what they are having. There is nothing pleasanter to look at than a great golden field, where the abounding sheaves are still standing, while the hedges and trees around are yet green as at Midsummer and have not dropt a leaf. And one recalls the soaking, heart-breaking harvest days of departed years. Everything is beautiful : is quiet : is cheerful and hopeful. No smoke darkens that blue sky, with the fleecy clouds : not a suspicion of the East wind blurs the sharp outline of those green Highland hills. It is the Holiday-time : Here is Rest. It is not work to write these lines, but helpful recreation. They have been such to the writer, though they should never be so to any one else. And there is nothing to worry : truly nothing. Of course, under such circumstances it is easy to feel very thankful to a kind God : very peaceful and contented and kindly-disposed to every mortal. One is ready to fancy that trust in God is strong ; and resignation to His will complete. One is ready to say, Ah, this lovely morning and these pleasant surround-

ings,—all the inexpressible charm that breathes to every sense this day from incomparable Perthshire, —all these things are gentle but powerful Means of Grace! That is, one feels the better for them: more Christian; more devout; more trustful; more kind.

Now, no doubt it is very pleasant if God makes it easy for us to be resigned, cheerful, uncareful, kindly. But in such a case it befits us to be very humble as well as very thankful. All this pleasurable and amiable condition of heart and mind (which may not last very long if something comes to ruffle) gives no assurance earthly of the strength and stability of our Christian principle and character. The fact simply is that when everything is in your favour, all things seem easy. You get along beautifully with wind and tide in your favour. The fact simply is that on such a day and amid such surroundings, you can do with very little grace: with much less grace than when you are tried. It is not that grace is stronger to-day, but that temptation is weaker and work lighter, and you can do with less grace. It is not much in your praise to say of you that you don't go wrong when there is nothing to lead you wrong. It is not much praise to say of a horse that he never shies when there is nothing earthly to shy at.

The test of a Means of Grace is not that it makes you feel a better Christian, and fancy yourself a better Christian. It is that it makes you in fact grow a better Christian, and abide a better Christian. This

Of Worry as a Means of Grace. 33

is the point to which I have been trying to bring you. You think it all very true, and quite plain. A great deal of the talk of good folk goes on just the contrary notion.

You go to church. It is a bright Sunday morning. You are in good health: all in your house are so. Every household arrangement has gone smoothly: there has not been jar nor friction in the working of the domestic machinery. You have had a quiet hour after breakfast. You did not cook your breakfast, nor clear away the breakfast things. You glanced, as you sat in your easy chair, into some volume in which a sympathetic hand touched you, finely. You are all ready in good time. The bright little faces look their brightest. They never grew thin with want: they never were pinched with cold. You arrive at church: it is conveniently near. It is a beautiful church: everything rubs you the right way in its decorous arrangements. There is lovely music, and hearty; the psalms and hymns are well chosen, and the tunes: every one joins who has a voice: you are *lifted up*. Many a one has been, who could not translate *Sursum Corda*. The church is quite full: the congregation is devout, and intelligent, and silent: coughing and sleeping are unknown. The prayers are prayers: devout, adapted to place and time, quiet, short. I am speaking of Scotland: south of the Tweed the prayers are quite sure to be perfection. You have the sermon from a charming

orator ; whose voice is music and whose genius gets straight to your heart, holds it and speaks to it : such a thing has sometimes been. And people say, What a privilege his congregation enjoys ! On such a Sunday morning (the like is given to some, not many), you say, What a privilege it is to worship here : what a helpful, blessed Sunday morning it has been : what favoured folk we are to be surrounded by such powerful Means of Grace !

In fact, it has not been so. All this has been simply a means of self-deception. Everything has been so enjoyable, so soothing, so lifting-up ; that you feel yourself good and kind and devout and trustful, because there is nothing whatsoever to make you anything else.

If you had risen in a frowsy, comfortless home ; if your heart had been heavy with sordid calculations coming of narrow means : if it had been a windy rainy morning and you had walked three miles over muddy roads : if you had entered into the kind of church I have seen, joined in the kind of singing I have heard (I forbear description of either, though it is at my pen's point), and listened to the homely preaching of a good worthy man who is not a great genius at all but just a faithful hard-working parish-minister ; you would not have been warmed and stimulated and lifted up in the least degree ; you would not have talked about privileges and means

of grace: you would not have been enabled to deceive yourself into the comfortable delusion that you are a devout, gracious, gentle Christian. But you would have learned some humbling truth about yourself and your spiritual condition which might have driven you in penitence and humility to Christ in prayer. And so the disappointing Sunday and its disappointing worship might have been in truth what you called the other: a Means of Grace.

Ay, it is what makes you a Christian that is properly called a Means of Grace: not what helps you to fancy yourself a Christian when possibly you are none at all.

A sterner discipline, far less pleasant to go through, which humbles us in the very dust under the fear that we have been deceiving ourselves and have no life in us whatsoever, may really do far more to promote the growth of Grace in us, than the soothing and pleasing influences, working on mere nature through mere nature, which we often call Means of Grace. It cannot be good for us to think far better of ourselves than we ought to think: far better than the fact. Our spiritual nature needs something that is analogous to the rude wind that roots the pine-tree firmer on the rock. Worry, that calls for patience and wisdom: Burdens, that call for strength: Disappointment, that calls for resignation, and the long struggle against bitterness of spirit: Takings-Down,

many, that painfully purge away the hateful self-conceit : all these, and more, diverted from their natural tendencies by God's Holy Spirit, constrained by God's Holy Spirit to push and drive in just the opposite of the natural direction, may be the great Means of Grace after all. For they will make us know ourselves for the poor weak creatures we are : they will keep us humble, and *that* is a thing of necessity : they will send us continually to Christ : they will make us pray without ceasing, pray everywhere.

We must not think, unless we be favoured as few have been, that we shall easily and pleasantly grow in grace, entirely by help from without, and apart from conscious, prolonged, painful effort.

I daresay St. Paul often thought to himself (for though Paul, he was also a man),* How much pleasanter in temper he might have been, and that without effort, if his nerves had not been continually jarred and his whole nature tried by the bitter thorn in the flesh. *That* would have been nothing. The thing is to be meek and pleasant in temper when the nerves are jarred and the whole nature tried. *That* is Grace : and strong Grace : and Grace about which there can be no mistake.

"The Word, Sacraments, and Prayer : " I know, friendly reader, you have thought of these, thus

* *Εἰ καὶ Παῦλος ἦν, ἀλλ' ἄνθρωπος ἦν.*—ST. CHRYSOSTOM.

Of Worry as a Means of Grace. 37

thinking of the Means of Grace. So have I. Every Scotchman ought. But that we be driven to these, under the deepest sense of need, and sometimes with all but a breaking heart, purely Christ sends us all-pervading, inevitable, stinging Worry!



CHAPTER V.

OF LIFE.

THE DIVERSE MATERIAL GOD'S GRACE MUST
WORK ON.



HERE is another general truth of which we must take account.

It is one which we ought to see and know from the first ; but which in fact we take in only through much experience.

At first, dealing with human souls, we think, vaguely, that what will do for one will do for all. We think that what will do for the average of the Race, will do for every one ; forgetting how exceptional most people are, both in their nature and in their experience. Now, nearing the end, we see that no two human beings are really very much alike. Now, we recognise the need of the most diverse treatment for diverse souls.

There are rough causes which act equally upon all. There are rough means which apply equally to all. Dip any human being in water, and it is sure to make him wet. Make any human being walk a great many miles; and he will be tired. It is quite different when we come to spiritual causes and effects. The soul is a strange, wilful, complex thing, and refuses to be reckoned on. Send a heavy disappointment on each of two men. They may take it and feel it quite differently; they may be influenced and formed by it quite differently. A wise pastor (that is, wise comparatively, for no mortal is really wise) going about among the sick and suffering; some know what diverse views of God's truth he feels are the right thing in this house of sorrow and in that,—are the opportune thing, the thing for the time and the place. Say two men have been cheated grossly. One smiles and puts it by: the other is fevered by it for a week: it burns inwardly like inflammation. Say the terrible trial of bereavement comes: the bitterest of all bereavement. One sits down by the fireside, beaten. He suffers in silence: God only knows how much. But one of another temperament is eager; is flurried; has very much to say. I have seen it all: I knew I never in this world had seen a more stricken soul.

Now, about the meeting and taking of Worry. I am sure I pointed out what is in the main the right way for all to meet it and take it; and to be the

better for it if that may be. But it falls very differently on different souls.

It is discouraging to a poor worried creature to think, Ah, no one but myself and Christ knows how hard I am trying to take this as I ought: yet there is no success. It is easy for others, so tried, to be patient, to be trustful, to be amiable. They don't inherit my sad constitution in body and soul. A great writer, you may remember, makes a jest of the troubles of a poor woman who (as he says) came of the Mount-Fydggett family. But, seriously, there is nothing to laugh at in the sorrowful inheritance of an uneasy organisation, moral and physical.

We recognise, at once, the awful differences between human beings in nature and temperament. It is part of the mystery of the diverse ways in which God treats His poor creatures. To some, He sends such an easy and prosperous life: to others, such a hard and bitter and degraded one. There are poor souls whose worldly condition makes them think ill of themselves, and wish to slink by and creep out of sight. A certain man, to whom God gave wonderful success (it does not matter in what walk of life), speaking of his wife's being taken from him, makes mention in an easy way of the *bright life* she lived; notably, always in the enjoyment of *ample means*. All this is spoken of as though it were quite a matter of course. And if the good man, in writing the words, remembered how much better he and his wife

fared than the overwhelming majority of humankind, how much better they fared than they in any way deserved at God's hand, he certainly did not say that he was remembering these truths. No right-thinking Christian man or woman grudges the worthy couple what they got. But a great many right-thinking Christian men and women, reading the history, have sadly shaken their heads, and sighed a weary sigh, and said to themselves silently, *How unlike me!* Yes; and have thought what a difference it would have made to their children had just about a hundredth part of that overflowing worldly prosperity been sent their way: and how differently the work of life would have been done, and its troubles faced, had it not been appointed to live under the cold shade of poverty, and under the pressure of constant care. *Anxius vixi*: the great Mediæval scholar wrote: writing therein the experience of most men and women who will ever read this page. Think what it might have been, had the story been summed up by saying, I lived a bright unanxious life; I never knew a heart sick with sordid calculations; I met honour wherever I went; a word from me was taken as a high reward by mortals far nobler and better than myself. Let it not be doubted that such a life has its peculiar temptations. But, assuredly, it is delivered from divers temptations to dark moods of soul which fall to the common lot of us poor weary disappointed anxious folk.

Yes, it is easy for some people to be good: that is, it is much easier than it is for others. To be cheerful, hopeful, patient, contented, is plain sailing for folk all whose surroundings go straight to make them so. And though all eyes can discern the help which comes to one from the outward lot, or the hindrance; not all can see, and not very many remember, that there may be something within which will be a far greater help or hindrance than all things without put together. The constitution you inherit will (in a true sense) never be quite changed. No, not even by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will not give any mortal a new nervous system. It is not in that sense that any one will ever be made *a new creature*. But the Holy Spirit, acting directly on the soul not the body, will (if you faithfully try) help and enable you to make a greater effort to resist and put down the temptation that comes to you of the constitution which came to you from your father and mother. All the same, the greater effort will be needed. It may cost you twenty times the effort and strain to take Worry rightly as from Christ's hand, that it costs your next neighbour. And the upshot of all the strain and effort may be something very poor. You carry a drag-weight which holds you back in running the race which is set before us: and nobody sees it. You know it bitterly, yourself: but you sometimes think nobody else knows. Ay, and more trying still. It may be that such as see that

you are indeed fighting the good fight at sad disadvantage, instead of being sorry for you, are angry with you. "An ill-conditioned, unamiable creature," they say: "a wrong-headed, crotchety creature, who twists things, and takes everything in an evil sense." "Look at the sour face of the creature: Really I have no patience with such *thrown* beings." Did not I, just yesterday, in a long day's parochial visitation, sit down by the cold fireside of a poor lonely woman, who has quarrelled with every friend: and looking at the morose features, listening to the harsh voice telling a complaining story of sorrows in which according to her own showing she was utterly in the wrong;—did not I, after all these years of dealing with my fellow-creatures, tend to get angry: when I ought to have felt the deepest sorrow and sympathy towards one whom it has pleased God to visit with a heavier burden than any bodily disability or deformity could be? Every one feels for the poor soul with the twisted body. But it takes both experience and sweetness to feel for the poor creature with the twisted mind. Of course, you can fight, and you ought to fight, against the promptings of the twisted mind: while the disabilities of the body you must just bear, and make the best of. I remember this, vividly. All I ask of you to remember is, that with certain tried mortals the mental drag-weight is there. And it is far harder for them, through this, to run the race, to fight the good fight. Perhaps I am

1

wrong, my reader, in thus taking for granted that you are among the happy ones to whom birth gave a sweet and reasonable nature, the congenial material for God's grace to work upon. Possibly you know within yourself, though you would hardly say it to any other, that you are of those who must carry weight in life, and fight as with crippled hands. Just a cheering word. Do not fancy that no one knows how hard it is for you to keep in any measure in the right way. "He knoweth our frame," Who gave it us. "We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." We have no secrets from Him. And we do not want to pass ourselves off upon Him for anything stronger and better than we are. We all know well, that we are very poor creatures. But we do not say that to everybody. In plain fact, we do not tell the whole truth concerning ourselves save to ONE.

It fell to me once, on a beautiful day in May, to fly, steam-spced, through the beautiful suburban district that lies South of London, in company with a very dear friend, whose burden of duty is very heavy. That morning he was sad, and silent: till suddenly he said, "I have seven separate worries gnawing away at me this morning." He had; and they were heavy, and implied much anxiety. But they were all public matters, and they arose out of the place he held, which is a high place. It seemed as though

such dignified worries could have been better borne, and more easily, than the humbling troubles, arising in their own lot, which ordinary mortals know. Doubtless this is delusion; and it comes of the certain fact, that only the wearer feels where the shoe pinches. Still, that was not my first reflection. It was, what a nature the Man of the Seven Worries had started with. They saddened him, but they could not sour; could not irritate. And one thought, with a remorseful envy, how extraordinarily disagreeable one had many times been under half the provocation. Nor was it specially comforting to reflect that this was because one is naturally so disagreeable. And yet, from earliest youth, one could not but think that the behaviour of dogs (according to good Doctor Watts) in the respect of Barking and Biting, is palliated as well as accounted for by the suggestion that "God has made them so." That is, if the fact be as stated.

You say to a fellow-creature of a peculiar temperament, Train yourself to kindliness in your estimate of those around. Don't be sharp to see stupidity or lack of truthfulness in others. Don't dwell upon little provocations, and so stick the dart further in and twist it round, and get yourself into a fever. Ah, we have all known folk, and Christian folk too, to whom it was quite vain to address such counsel. Most striking instances are pressing themselves upon me at this moment. You would smile at some, it

they were recorded : though it was no smiling matter to any one when they occurred. And as for recording them, that is exactly what I am not going to do.

Then are we to make up our mind that our faults in temper and temperament are never to be cured ? I trow not, unless we are to make up our mind likewise to go utterly to the Bad. It may never be so easy for you to resist the terrible temptations of daily Worry, as it is for others more favoured by their birth, and from their birth. And you may stumble often to the last, and have good reason for shame and for penitence. But I will not believe that by faithful endeavours and by the grace of God we may not in the long-run overcome any temptation whatsoever. You remember how one, in old days, who pretended to judge of men's character by their face, had a swarthy ill-looking Satyr set before him ; and was asked what-like man was that : and gave a most condemnatory estimate. The ill-looking satyr was the purest and noblest of all the millions of the Race that never heard of Christ : it was SOCRATES. The bystanders laughed and jeered at the wrong judgment. But Socrates staid them, and said, "He is right : I was all that, but Philosophy has cured me." Philosophy, he said. I will not doubt that God's grace was there : has been in all that ever was good in human being. The Sage said all he knew. We know more and better : for which God be thanked.

What God's Grace must work on. 47

We know where to look : every means else would be a failure. As holy Bishop Andrewes said, "If Christ, and the Holy Spirit, take us not in hand, all cures else are but a palliative."

But we shall ask, many times daily, to be taken in hand. And we shall do our own utmost and best.



CHAPTER VI.

OF LIFE.

OF A TRYING MEANS OF GRACE.



ARE you content to go through something you will not like, if it is to do you good? Because if you are, I can show you how.

Will you faithfully try a Means of Grace which I will suggest to you, though it is not pleasant in the use?

Rather let us put the case this way: for trouble is not for us to seek, but for God to send.

There is a certain painful experience, which comes to some people many times and sometimes stays with them long: and which when it comes irks us and humbles us so that we try to get away from it. Now would it not be better to humbly take it when God sends it: to sadly welcome it when we recognise its returning (for it will come whether we welcome it or

not): and to try to get good out of it? This is the thing I mean to say. For, in sober truth, it is rather an awful thing to say that we wish to get nearer to Christ, "even though it be a cross" that lifts us nearer. It is better and safer to say, If the cross comes, *When* the cross comes, grant it bring me nearer to thee, my Saviour.

In things which concern our health, or our worldly condition, we all know what it is to brace ourselves up to make an effort ; to go through sharp pain lasting for more than one moment or two that we may arrive at abiding ease on the other side. "Yes, I'll have it out," you have said when you were a very little fellow concerning the tooth which could never cease to ache. And when you came to man's or woman's estate, you know what it is to have gone thoroughly into a disagreeable piece of business from which you shrank nervously, knowing that thus only could matters be set on a healthy footing. You "had it out," in quite a different sense from the little boy's, with a friend when some stupid misunderstanding arose between you. And if you were both worthy folk, the thunder-storm cleared the air, and all was serene again.

You and I have been thinking a good deal about Means of Grace. It does not matter at all what it was that led me to think of this particular one, and to intercalate some notice of it here. Something came which made me think of it : that is quite enough.

And the subject is one very proper to be thought of by Christian folk at any time ; and helpful to you and me.

You remember the odd phrase of devout French people long ago. They talked of going into retirement, or of attending many church-services, or of subjecting themselves to discipline of any kind, to *make their soul*. The phrase is odd in our ears, because it is unfamiliar : but those who used it would no doubt have thought it as odd to talk of *preaching all day*, or to use other expressions well understood in Scotland. It meant, of course, to take themselves earnestly in hand, spiritually: to give more than ordinary thought and pains to their spiritual condition, to the deepening of their spiritual life. It was to take up one failing,—the “besetting sin,”—and to try to subdue it. To take up one attainment,—this or that grace or virtue,—and to try to grow in it: to work upon that. Surely this would be a good thing, now and then. St. Paul knew what it means : “This one thing I do.” It concentrates energy. It may eventuate in a permanent step in progress.

All this is introductory to saying that just at present one feels deeply that Christian folk might do well to aim specially at Penitence and Humility. We need, every now and then, to see to the foundations. And here is the very foundation-grace of the Christian character. Self-satisfaction will not do: “God resisteth the proud.” You have read, in ultra-

polished lines, what claims to be *The Universal Prayer*. But the right universal prayer, suiting everybody and saying everything, is not Mr. Pope's. It is by a certain nameless Publican. It is *God be merciful to me a sinner*.

There are Means of Grace, there are spiritual exertions and *exercises* (as good men used to call them), which are not only spiritually helpful: they are *pleasant* in the use. They make you better: and they make you happy while using them. The Communion season (as the name *Eucharist* reminds us) is mainly one of thankful joy. And indeed, as for all hearty worship, helped by the Blessed Spirit, it is *How amiable are Thy tabernacles*. And there is a certain promise, sometimes forgotten, *I will make them joyful in My house of prayer*. But as for the discipline which will indeed make us humble and penitent, it is not so. Here is a spiritual exercise which is salutary, but not pleasant. If in any real way we aim at sorrow for sin, at penitence, it must be a painful experience. For it means that we look back, and see, with shame and sorrow, many very foolish and very evil things that we have ourselves done. There is no reality in all the confessions we make, and all the penitence we profess, unless this be done. And it is very painful: very humbling. There is nothing so taking down: no misfortune nor disappointment nor proof how little other people think of us is the least like being constrained to think very

badly of ourselves. After long time there are those who blush yet at the remembrance of youthful and even of childish follies and misdoings. Ay, after thirty years, you tingle all over, with shame and self-reproach, thinking of things you have said and done : which you cannot forget, though you would give a great deal to do so. Perhaps it is morbid : but times come to some, very sorrowful times, when all past life seems to have been failure, folly, sin : when with a bitter vividness, that humbles in the very dust, the unutterable foolishness and badness of many individual doings and of whole tracts of time, rise up and *will be* looked at and reckoned with : a terrible premonition of a judgment day. I said, perhaps it is morbid : but David, King and Psalmist, knew the experience, as he knew most of our experiences. He tells us that days came to him in which, look where he might, there was one wretched sight that would not go : "My sin is ever before me." Now what I am set on pressing on every one who may ever read these lines, is this : When that distressing experience comes, let us try to turn it to spiritual advantage. Let us try to get good out of it. We have been too much accustomed to trying to escape from it : to look another way. We did not succeed even in that : so we had the pain without the discipline. What we should try for is that whenever the rod falls on us, we should learn from it : that we should never suffer pain without trying hard to be the better for it. If

we try hard, help will come. You have been thinking well of yourself, and your doings: when all of a sudden your little scaffolding of poor sticks breaks under you, and you see (perhaps for days together), with a dismal clearness, what a sorry thing you have made of it all: what miserable mistakes you have blundered into: what inexpressible follies: worse things than follies, which bow you down: and (in brief) what a poor creature you are. Some robustious folk would say all this is overdone: is morbid. Let me just ask such, ask anybody, Did you ever see yourself worse than you are accustomed habitually to call yourself in your confessions and prayers? Did you mean what you said to God in your confessions and prayers: or did you merely use conventional language because you thought it was the right thing to say? If you want to be helped to understand and to really mean what you are wont to say in your prayers about yourself, I say to you, Welcome this fresh and startling view of things: turn to spiritual account this painful exercise which your soul is passing through. Do not take the heavy stripe and be none the better for it. You will bear all this in quite a different spirit than you have possibly known till now, if you resolve that it *shall serve*: it shall teach you what you tend to forget: it shall leave you spiritually bettered: it shall be a humbling, trying, painful yet searching and effective Means of Grace.

We cannot exactly go and make up our mind that

we shall be humbled and penitent : after the fashion of him whose not quite serious counsel was "*Let us all be unhappy*" in certain times and circumstances of which no more just now. We cannot just make up our mind that we shall be humbled and penitent because we think it would be good for us if we were. We must see *Reason Why*. And there is uncommonly strong Reason Why. And it is in these sorrowful seasons of which so much has been said that we discern it. It is only the truth we see : nothing more nor worse : when we think of ourselves most unfavourably.

Yes : though we cannot just make up our mind that we shall be humble and penitent, and then find ourselves so : we can put ourselves in the way of that wholesome discipline which shall effectually make us so. We can try our hardest to profit by the sore discipline which would make us so, when it comes. And it will come not unfrequently. Sometimes it will abide long. While we stay under the cloud, we shall remember Who sent it : we shall be docile children, content to learn what is excellent to know though we must learn it with a heavy heart. It was a very wise and (in the main) good man who said, "I will be sorry for my sin." He knew how to set about being sorry. So do we : looking back, and looking in, we shall discern terribly sufficient reason. The really morbid condition of matters is, When we are extremely pleased with ourselves. No poor

creature, crying to God for mercy, even in unbefitting place and time (as some have had to do), was so far away from the healthful discernment of Facts, as the lady of extremely elevated rank seventy years since, who complained bitterly of a preacher who ventured to declare that even the most exalted had hearts needing to be changed by God's grace, "Just as if I had been one of the Rabble." Poor Duchess! let us hope she learned other things. "Thou hast told us that there is a godly and helpful sorrow: Deny us not when we beg that sorrow from Thee." Even such was the petition prepared for his own use and that of his friends, two centuries ago, by a good man who was so simply devout, and who so abhorred politic doings even to reach a good end, that one trembles to think what a very small person he would have proved in certain spheres of what is now termed *Ecclesiastical Life*. But then he would probably have said that in such spheres he could discern no life at all.

Bishop Butler says that "it is as easy to close the eyes of the mind as of the body." And he goes on to add what comes to this: that as we do not find it pleasant to look into ourselves or back upon our life, we look another way. I am not sure that the great man was right in that first statement. Indeed I am sure that he was wrong. But in saying a thing like that, he had come away from the range of thought where his great strength lay, and had

come into a region in which men far less weighty but who could look into their fellow-creatures with a more sympathetic eye,—men with a tenth part of the head but with ten times the heart,—could beat Bishop Butler out of the field utterly. But the Bishop is right beyond question when he proceeds, "For who would choose to be put out of humour with himself? No one surely, if it were not in order to mend, and to be more thoroughly and better pleased with himself for the future." It is not for the present pain, which many know to be very real, that one would experience this sorrow in the remembrance of past wanderings; but for the good we shall get of it. Here, as with most of the painful discipline which comes to us, we hold by the *Nevertheless afterward*. And, thinking of that, we shall give a lowly welcome to this trying Means of Grace when it comes, when it stays. It is a very different thing from soul-lightening Prayer, from soul-uplifting Praise. There is no glow of heart: no elation of look or step: and it cannot be done in company,—it is a lonely thing. For that matter, all searching mental discipline, all hard intellectual work, is very lonely. But here is the most humbling of all possible experiences. It is needful: all needful. Wherefore we shall bow our head, and go under the dark wave as when we were little folk: hoping to come out the better for it on the other side.

No doubt, for this life, and this life's success, a

favourable opinion of one's self, the *good conceit* of homely Scotch phrase, is helpful as well as pleasant. It does not do to be brought down too thoroughly into the dust. That would take the spring and energy and hopefulness out of us, and make us break down beaten. But the risk is extremely small, for folk in normal health of body and mind, of being too humble. The risk is all the other way. And the true humbleness that comes of the sad insight concerning which we have thought at this time, will take us in deep earnestness to the Blessed Redeemer: to be Forgiven for His great sacrifice, to be Changed by His gracious Spirit.



CHAPTER VII.

OF LIFE.

WHEN THEY WENT AWAY.



HE has a son in New Zealand : a fine lad.

This is one of the things you say about other people, with very little sense of what is meant by them, and with no appreciable feeling at all. Some day, if you live long enough, they come home to yourself : and the difference is beyond words to tell. You know what they mean. You do not try to express it to anybody. There are things not to be spoken about. But, besides that, no words at the command of ordinary folk can even distantly approach to expressing human feeling.

Yes : I am going to his wife's funeral to-day.

You say the words quite composedly. Then you are cheerfully busy with many things till close upon the hour. You walk smartly to the place. You

feel just a little at the time : as for that, a good deal turns on how the service is done. Then you hurry briskly back to the day's occupations, and push on. It was rather a plague, the interruption : that is the fact.

But when all this comes to yourself.

Of course, if you felt the sorrows of others as much as your own, you would not be fit for the work of life. And it is right that things should be ordered as they are. I have indeed known one who after passing through great trials, lasting over many years, did for a time feel as though a shallowness and thinness came into all his life when he had to bear no sorrow but the sorrow of others. But he told me that in a little while that grew very heavy, when there was none other. And this experience did not last long. A normal selfishness came back again, with the return of the due share of human trouble.

We look at this man and that woman going about : we have no thought of what they have gone through. Very heavy work, and very sore trial may have been undergone, yet little trace be left on the quiet face and the unobtrusive figure. One you see daily is thinking, thinking, perpetually, of some absent one you never heard of. I sat, two days since, in a railway carriage, opposite one who has to bear a burden which would kill me : I wondered how she did it. It was a sad, worn, kind, gentle face : the hair was prematurely gray : she was very quiet. One thought, Are

you remembering it all? What is in your memory and your heart, looking out on that first green of Spring? For years I knew well an aged woman, always busy and cheerful, though not without a temper. Suddenly, I learnt how strange her history had been: what great reverse of fortune had befallen her: what distant lands she had seen, and what unimaginable breadths of Southern Sea. One day I spoke to her of what she had passed through, still looking so cheery and well. I never forget how the self-contained old Scotchwoman burst into a passion of tears; and cried out, "It's a wonder that I'm living at all!"

I had thought to say a great deal more about *Worry*: and how to bear it and profit by it. But I have changed my plan. For half the year is gone: and there are very many things left to say in the time that remains. I have given, too, in substance, my scheme for making the best of that daily characteristic of our daily life. And besides this, perhaps there is in some a tendency to an unworthy use of the *Means of Grace*, and of all our *Religion*: I mean, to use all these just to make our life bearable and cheerful. I believe that in these days many really good people turn their religion mainly to this end. That is not quite worthy. The first thing should be, to make our life good and useful: if peace comes, well. The next thing should be to be always more or less consciously looking out beyond what is seen and tem-

poral : which in fact we are many days not doing at all. Of this hereafter.

Now, *When They Went Away*. Let us think of times in the little history which are never quite forgot : which are always latently present : which are sometimes vividly recalled and lived over again, not without tears.

If there be any good in you, middle-aged and aging folk, you know it comes of your intercourse with little children. This in divers ways. Life is freshened. Hope revives, thinking of all the possibilities of a new start and a new career. The good which never came to you may come to your little boy or girl. Selfishness, that grows upon the solitary, is broken in upon. You are trained, naturally and pleasantly, to think of others and to work for them : you cheerfully give up your own enjoyment for the sake of the little folk, never even thinking that you are doing so. But there are great sorrows too. I do not even suggest such a thing as one turning out ill : *that* must not be. Only, with such a possibility for a moment in the mind, go and read Wordsworth's *Michael* ; and I think you will be aware of a homely pathos never exceeded in human writing or human speech. Ah, set beside *that*, pages over which tears innumerable have been shed, turn to a shallow falsetto. I do not here suggest the parting that is made by the Great Change. Only that months slip away, and grow into years : and the time comes when they must

go out from the Home, must go away and think and act for themselves, the little boys and girls who (you used to think) could not be safe out of your sight. There are things too sacred to be spoken much of: we keep them to ourselves. And I know one human being whom it fills with wrath unutterable when some coarse-grained soul, aiming at the pathetic, vulgarly rakes up, in clumsy public discourse, things to be quietly thought of sitting by the fireside alone: to be quietly spoken of (and not very often that) to about two or three of all the millions of humankind. All I say is, that the most touching of all events are the simplest: are those which come into the lot of quite commonplace folk. I well remember one morning meeting one who had gallantly served his country on tropical battlefields, walking with feverish haste to the railway station with his son, a lad of eighteen, going away to India to begin his life as a soldier. The mother and sisters had been left at home, a minute before: father and son were trying to bear up bravely, but it was as much as they could do. They stopped just a moment, to say Good-bye: and the father, eagerly pointing to the bright sunrise, exclaimed, *A Good Omen!* But if the omen was fair, it was false: that hopeful youth returned no more. The circumstances varied infinitely: but with each one of the countless thousands who have gone far away, there was the great overwhelming fact of parting. And plain quiet folk, going about their vocations, are

keeping, at the bottom of their heart, the remembrance of the last looks and words, the last sight of the familiar face and form, all the surroundings. Many things fade from memory, as you grow old : things which were very interesting at the time, which were anxious and critical, are wonderfully soon forgot ; it is only when you turn back to some written record that you recall how deeply they concerned you when present. But it is not so here. It was the early morning when he went : you hear the step yet, going upstairs to say Good-bye to his little brothers, wakened from their sleep. He reminded you, at the last, of something he had said to you when a very little child : you will remember that vividly till you die. But it is not of these things I am to write : they are not to be told. It is rather how you think that a year will go over : and another : it will be Winter, the dark nights : it will be Summer, the sunshine and green leaves : the house will be the same, the old faces of its belongings : the manner of life will remain, the divers occupations ; the hours of the day will come round, the engagement of each, the special feeling of each : but through all there will be the sense of something lost, a vague remorse that you did not make more of it while you had it : that bright face will be gone out of the house, that active step never will cross the threshold : and going about your work, you never can meet in the familiar ways the presence that was always very

pleasant to see. Letters will come : and they will be prized, read and re-read : but no letter that ever was written can look at you and speak to you like the living human being. You will go on, through the manifold details of your work : work which is always more lonely than people think. Nobody knows all the little outs and ins of it : nobody knows how you feel going through it : specially if it be work that implies a nervous pull upon you, as the work of many men does. But through it all, you used to think they were with you : you used to fancy they knew more than in truth they did, both of it and of you. Now, you go about your work alone. Strangers and acquaintances know your aging face, and are familiar with your voice, and your little outward characteristics and ways. But that is not Knowing you. No recent acquaintance can know you ; nor any human being whose acquaintance with you comes through your profession or business only or mainly. When you get behind the scenes with some man who fills a great public place : when you come to know how like he is to much lesser men, and how he actually feels when executing great functions which you used to look at from the outside : you are wonderfully drawn to him. And if ever you envied him his elevation, you do so no more.

As for the Last Parting, it is quite vain to speak of it. This may be said : When life has been lived fully out, when the work of life has been fairly done ;

though the trial is unspeakable, you will after a while be able to reconcile your mind to it. I sometimes see old couples, parted after forty, fifty, sixty years together. It is plain that the great comfort is, that the parting is only for a very little while. But when much of life may yet remain, the first falling of the blow is mortal. Nor is it, to a worthy soul in the first awful grief, any alleviation at all to think that it will be got over. To be told by worldly experience, that all this is just a question of time and health: that the most deadly wound will be cicatrised: that (as Sir Walter puts it the broken heart will be nicely pieced together again: is aggravation, not alleviation. Let anything come but that! You hate and despise yourself at the bare suggestion of what you may take quite pleasantly when it comes. Let us pass from that. But how poor human beings lived through bereavement, who knew no future life, one cannot even imagine. You may readily do much better than read Miss Martineau's *Autobiography*. But if you read it, you will come to the passage where she tells of two of her friends, who were widows: how they lived on only by looking to reunion. She thought them fools: and she wanted no such thing for herself. She was cheerful and content in the prospect of going out like an expiring taper: she wished no other for any she had loved. But then, she was a quite exceptional soul: singularly morbid and repulsive in many of her ways and

notions. And she had never, in fact, come very close in affection to anybody. Let us suffer ever so bitterly, rather than be cheered as she was cheered ! To miss no one who is gone : to be content never again to see the kindest faces you ever saw : to care (in fact) for nobody but yourself : appears to me the lowest depth that can be reached by mortal. Rather, sitting by the evening fireside, let one be remembered (though with many tears) who used to share that warmth and light : but who is gone to something better. Rather, taking to your lonely work, remember with ever so aching desolation how once there was one who felt so deep interest in it all, and knew all its details as much as these could be known to any save yourself. She was pretty well broken-hearted, that poor young widow whose husband and little boys had been taken in one bleak winter : but she would ten thousand times rather have been so, than have missed them less :

“ I ettle whiles to spin,
But wee, wee patterin’ feet,
Come rinnin’ out and in,
And then I just maun greet :
I ken it’s fancy a’,
And faster flows the tear,
That my a’ dwined awa’,
Sin’ the fa’ o’ the year.”

But our little talk must cease. Let the last words be these.

You have under your roof, some of you who

read this page, those who are away from their homes: your servants. Be kind to them: Try your best to keep them right: Care for them in body and soul: for the sake of one gone out from your door, and needing friends and sympathy far away. Look at the little folk still with you. Make the most of their childhood while it lasts: it will not last long. You know for certain now, what you once used to say without in any way taking it in, that in a little they will be gone out from you. You are likewise fully aware that before very long you shall have gone out from this life, to begin God knows what elsewhere: and you cannot do anything to help or comfort those you care most for from the farther shore. Wherefore, be kind and helpful to everybody's little boy, to everybody's little girl: not least when they have lost the charm of childhood, and are not little any longer. Remember, somebody is thinking of them: in this world or in another.



CHAPTER VIII.

OF LIFE.

BLINKS.



T is an exceptional time that is passing over : it is a Blink, short and bright. Many who will read this page know that is strange, in a hard-working life, to have some days of absolute rest : all the usual engagements and worries far away. And to one who abides amid sterner scenes, it is strange, too (and very pleasant), to be here in this Garden of Southern England, where the lovely landscape looks its loveliest in these last days of May. The apple-trees are laden with blossoms. The hawthorns blaze, snow-white in the sunshine, bowed down with bloom. The lilacs and horse-chestnuts are in glory. Looking South, the horizon all round is eight miles off : the world is intensely green, and it seems to be wooded everywhere. This morning, the

sky overhead is of unbroken blue: the sunshine is brilliant as through the dismal Winter which is gone one had quite forgot the sunshine could be: the warmth is as of the tropics. The air is heavy with fragrance. Go where you may, the scent of lilac and hawthorn is waiting for you. It is a beautiful world, after all.

Walking about here, quietly and alone, let us try to realise all the fair surroundings before they go. In a little while, the writer will be gone from this lovely place, to other scenes: very grand in their way, but in quite another way. It is the Law of our Life, that things shall be at their best for brief blinks. What lasts shall be a subdued light, a sober gray. As the old Prophet puts it, the average light of our existence is "not clear, nor dark." That is the daily food of human nature.

Let no small critic complain of a Mixed Metaphor. I see it, quite plainly. And a very good thing too.

It is only for a few days of all those which make the year, that those apple-trees are laden with that lovely burden of beauty and fragrance: that the air is so full of pleasant scents and sounds: for beyond the soft *susurrus* of swaying branches in this gentle South-West breeze, the woods are alive with nightingales of the sweetest and mightiest song. It is only for a few days in the year that the gray English sky lifts into that blazing sapphire: that the

hawthorns bend under their load of bloom, and the lilacs : that the laburnums hang out their pale gold in the leafy gloom ; and the rhododendrons make those huge masses of deep red. Even the first miraculous green seems to pass from the trees, as our eyes grow accustomed to it. We go terribly fast through these months whose names are music, and which we would detain with us if we could : and we find ourselves slowing again in the Winter cold and gloom : which in the regions best known to the writer abide for seven months of the twelve. For weeks together, these branches will be bare and dripping : the air will be raw and searching : the sky a doleful gray. Then will be the season for going indoors and working hard : there will be nothing to tempt one to linger idly without. The bitter blast will shake the windows : the clouds will rack overhead, ragged and threatening : the white mantle of the snow will lie deep everywhere. It will be a different world altogether.

Even so is it with all our life. The Best that comes to us comes in Blinks : short, transient : yet to be remembered thankfully when they are past, and to be made very much of when they are present. All that is specially Good : all that is specially Beautiful, and Enjoyable : comes for but a little time. The mountain-peaks must needs be far apart, must needs be comparatively few. And if all were made mountain-tops, it would be a Plain. Here and there,

you find folk, favoured above their Race, all whose life is lived as on those mountain peaks of worldly good and beauty which are the Blinks of good and beauty in the lives of other men. But the Blink which lasts always is no more than ordinary day-light : the hill-top which is everywhere is no more than a level expanse. What has struck one sometimes is, How easily some people take this profusion of natural loveliness : the sunshiny surroundings : the beautiful churches and dwellings : the stately services in which God's worship is here expressed. We, to whom those are given only as Blinks, enjoy them with a hundredfold intensity. The sublime vault, the ivied tower, the marvellous music, which thrill us through, are taken by very many of our fellow-creatures as mere matters of course. Lifted to a higher level, people gradually grow unconscious of it. And one has remarked that the freshly-interesting Blink in the life of those so favoured, comes to be a glimpse of very simple and homely things. A Scotch parish-church after Westminster Abbey : a stolen night in a Kincardineshire village inn after Windsor Castle : so is human nature made. It is the change that is vividly felt. And vivid sensation is fresh and pleasant, where it is not painful.

But, unless in lives which are very exceptional even in a world of work and trouble, the Blink is given : the transient pleasant experience, to which we look forward, and on which we look back. In the driving,

worrying day (unless we are to break down altogether), there must be some little blink of rest. It may be ever so short. But the time must be when we can sit and gaze into the Winter fire, and vaguely muse if but for a few minutes : in which we can look out on the Summer twilight if but for a little while, and rest. I have known some who through anxious and laborious years had but very little of this : but they would have died had they not had some little : and they made much of it. The driver of a London omnibus said to a passenger, who sat beside him and inquired with unfeigned sympathy as to the little ways of his life, "It's a long afternoon : but when I get up to Highgate about six o'clock I get my cup of tea ; and *that is something to look forward to.*" A little thing serves, you see, to keep a poor human being from breaking down. And we have all of us our Blinks of mild enjoyment, hardly known to any other mortal, which keep us on our feet : these come daily, once or twice or more in the day : if we told an unsympathetic soul about them, the unsympathetic soul would think us fools. As indeed we should be, for talking about them to the unsympathetic soul. Those who have good long blinks of rest in each day : and those to whom the Lord's Day is indeed a Sabbath-Rest : may manage to get on wonderfully without anything more. But there are others on whom month by month a weariness of soul and body grows, which asks for the longer blink of the yearly

Holiday. This may be short: but it ought to be complete. As for those who are driven very hard, great statesmen and the like, whose burden is heavy beyond one's understanding of how they bear it, one remarks how beyond the yearly vacation they seek every now and then their three, five, ten days of rest: always a blink: and come back calmed and strengthened. Then, interesting events in one's life, interesting scenes visited however hastily, are helpful blinks, changeful, cheering, reviving. That little flintstone, taken from the wall of vanished Verulam, recalls a pleasant blink. I have laid it down close by my paper: and the time comes back, the last afternoon of a departed May, in which I walked through the green masses of the ruined Roman city, and sitting on the top of what we call a paling (I have no doubt they call it something else there), looked for two hours across the verdant valley upon the vast length of St. Alban's Cathedral, whose tower showed so plainly its strange material of Roman tiles, used for a second time. I see the quiet lane: and the white clouds slowly drifting above the grand church and the red little city amid masses of green trees. One felt it strange to sit there, a solitary stranger, trying to take in the scene and to take in that one was there: It is stranger now, on many days, to let the little flint bring back these things into the sober gray of daily work and worry. As you get older, you will try hard, and not very successfully, when for a little while you are

in a strange and interesting place, to feel that you are indeed there. The writer, who has seen very little, has therefore tried his best to make much (to himself) of the little he has seen ; but he looks, with unfeigned awe, upon the rare friend who can tell of his first view of Damascus : or how he spent a Sunday on the Mount of Olives looking at Jerusalem. How strange an experience to do so : and to seek to take in where one was : what a possession, for all after life, to recall that wonderful blink of place and time ! I know some folk to whom that experience would be so strange, that they would rather forego it. Quite ordinary things are wonderful enough, if really taken in. It sufficed one I know to walk, two days since, round and round the Cloister of St. George's Chapel at Windsor, for just an hour, in what to him was most remarkable company ; diligently getting the whole thing into his memory. It sufficed, abundantly, to pervade, in solitude, the cloisters of Westminster Abbey, seeking to catch the genius of the place. It is only in a blink these things come home. I read once, in an American paper, a letter in which an enthusiastic pilgrim described a visit of two hours to a certain Scotch city. He wrote very prettily : described very vividly : and then he summed up thus : "Never, till I enter the new Jerusalem, can my soul be stirred as it was when I walked along that street." Now, I walk along that street several times upon most days. And I never fail to be aware of its

charm. It is the most interesting street in Scotland, beyond question or comparison. But not to any mortal who knows it, and every dwelling in it, as I do, can it wear the glamour, the strangeness, the mystery, that it wears for ever in the memory of the transient pilgrim to whom it was and is a blink.

The blooming season is brief, is transient, in Nature ; and in our own life, and all its doings and ways. It is only for a little while, in the circle of the year, that these branches come to that charm of blossoms. It is only for little times, capriciously coming now and then, that human beings are lifted up to be and to do the very best that is in them to be or do. In the most charming music, there are little passages exquisite above all the rest, that touch the heart and linger on the ear. In all poetry, notably in that of the chiefest poet of all, there are gleams above the rest : touches of unutterable pathos, intuitions of inspired wisdom, unapproachable felicities of thought and expression. You have your few favourite pages, turned to many times, in the volumes that most come home to you and help you : Ay, in that Book which is the Best, there are supreme lines which are sublimely the best of all. On a far lower level (though high still), you know how the marvellously excellent gleams out amid the humdrum. Bishop Ken's Morning and Evening Hymns (which to devout English-speaking folk are *The Morning and Evening Hymns*) are survivals from a

forgotten *Christian Year*. The touching and beautiful *Abide with me*, is the blossom of a somewhat dreary and disappointing volume of verses. But reality did the work of genius: the light was fading fast when the dying author wrote his undying lines. And gleaming beautifully amid a great amount of rubbish, abide for ever certain soul-uplifting and heart-stirring utterances of St. Augustine. Yes: the Best, is a Blink. There is the angelic smile, and it flits away: there is the voice above all music, and the rest is silence. And in our own humble experience, there are the hours when we see into things clearly, and can grasp our subject; when we can write with a feverish fluency, the words being truly given to us; and the sense of effort being unknown: when, summoned by no skill of ours, there rise from all past life the experiences which can cast light on just the matter in hand. Better still, you know the seasons in which you feel charitably disposed to every human being: in which you can put yourself in the place of those who differ from you the most, and discern how much may be said for their way of thinking: and in which, though really one cannot remember that anybody did ever very particularly trespass against us, we are entirely ready to forgive such, if any such there be. You may even, for a little, attain to the position of that fortunate little boy, whose memorable declaration was "I feel awfully jolly, and I don't know why." But it is not commonly given even to the best of little boys to

know that mood, unless as a transient gleam in the blank daylight of ordinary existence.

Possibly we never are more painfully aware of the Transience of the Best, and the persistent Survival of the Unfittest, than in regard to our higher and better life. At the Communion-time, specially, you know what it is to be indeed *lifted up*. The power of evil in you is weakened: it seems dead. You can truly cast your care upon your Saviour: you are delivered from "care's unthankful gloom." You are at your Best: in faith, in temper, in mood. Many more are at their best, with you. The sorrowful irreverence which too often characterises the national worship, is quite purged out on a Communion-day. Then only (till quite lately) could you see the head bowed down in silent prayer, in the country churches of Scotland. I have seen God's worship rendered in divers ways, in many places: I do not think the solemnity and pathos could be exceeded anywhere on earth of the Communion Sunday in an Ayrshire country church when I was a boy. It was indeed a going up to the *Mount of Ordinances*: the old name is musical in my ear, and will be to the last. But we used to be told that the devoutest communicant must soon come down from the mount, and take to the daily path of toil, temptation, worry; of irritated temper and hasty speech: The etherealised minister who at the Holy Table expressed feelings and views probably a little lower than those of the

angels, might even be found making a speech in his Presbytery which reminded some hearers of beings exactly the reverse. Ah, it was but a Blink : an evanescent gleam in the experience of pastor and people. Sad, indeed, that it should be such. Sad, but true. It seems as though God had said that we poor sinful beings can be at our best and happiest, our most trustful and peaceful, only for brief and transient minutes or hours.

It will not be always so. That may be the law below : but there are better things above. And it would be Heaven, to have always present with us the very best we have known on earth : the very best, purest, kindest, in heart and temper : the peace and happiness of the happiest Communion, when Christ was very near. I do not know how beautiful the Country may be which we seek : nor how glorious the Golden City. It seems as if, long ago, there were hawthorn and honeysuckle, roses and lilies, even in Galloway, unspoiled from their Maker's Hand, which might suffice anywhere. It seems as though one had seen, on worn human faces, an elevation of devout and happy feeling, hardly to be exceeded anywhere. It seems as though one had known good men and women who, at their best, could scarcely be better. And we shall hold by this : that these bright Blinks are indications of what the Better Life will always be. There, the beautiful gleam, physical, moral, spiritual, that was here so transient, will always abide : and the everlasting year will be the sweet Summer-time.



CHAPTER IX.

OF LIFE.

HELPED BY LITTLE THINGS.

WHEN I was a boy, a man of very exceptional ability and culture was appointed to fill a certain position (in Mesopotamia), for which a much rougher man would have been a great deal better fitted. It was as though a razor of refined edge should be set to cut blocks, some of them singularly knotty. You have read wise and beautiful pages which tell the story of that Ugly Duck which was thought little of because it was far too good for the comprehension of those among whom it had to live. The quacking tribe contemned it because it was so unlike ducks in general. But the day came wherein the vilipended creature fell into the society of those who could appreciate it. And then, all declared it

the most beautiful of beautiful birds. For the Ugly Duck was a noble Swan !

I will not in any way indicate the walk of life in which this accomplished human being was placed. Nothing turns upon that. But I may not unfitly say that if any reader of this page fancies he knows it, he is quite mistaken. The world is bigger than some good folk think.

But this eminent man had a dog, whose name was *Help*. A very good name. One day he was out walking through the fields, attended by this faithful companion. The dog disappeared from view. Whereupon its master, seeking to call it back, called out, *Help, Help!* On which a saturnine old blockhead, one of a group of self-sufficient blockheads standing by, turning to his neighbour, said, *Ay: he'll need help*. This was intended as a joke: not unseasoned with truth. And a roar of laughter followed.

No doubt, he did need help. But only in the sense in which all mortals, set to do work and to bear burdens, need it. It may be supposed he got it. For, after the difficulties of the first start, he applied his faculties to the task appointed: he filled his place: he did its work admirably: he kept, through many years, the highest level of the esteem and affection of all who knew him. And their number was not small. In a year or two, no one thought of saying he "needed help." In after years, I enjoyed the privilege of knowing him well. And I can testify that I was helped by

him as I have been by very few. Ah, how long ago !
But he is not forgotten.

I have written, *No one thought of saying he needed help.*

I mean, of course, save as we all do; the wisest and strongest of the Race ; as really as the weakest and flightiest. I suppose that all wise and good men and women, more and more as they grow older and experience increases, are specially inclined, at the beginning of each day, to make very urgent application in that Quarter from which only comes sufficient help : and to say, very seriously, that they will not presume to set them to the divers and manifold duties of a new day unless in the simplest reliance on something beyond themselves : unless in the humble hope to be counselled by that Wisdom, and upheld by that mighty Power.

I do not know any more real Fact, in the life of many aging folk, who have been trouble-tried and are growing a little weary. We live in that hope. If we had it not, we should break down. We are not self-sufficing. We must be buttressed from without. There never were spoken nor written words truer to the experience of all people worth counting, than certain very familiar ones which tell how "we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves."

But, though I am quite sure that all Help comes from the same Source, ultimately : and that there is just One Hand in all this Universe which does in fact

hold us up : yet things far more than are commonly recognised as such may be CHRIST'S ministers : and the stream of grace that comes from Above may be conveyed untainted to our poor hearts through very little and humble channels of communication. I think we forget this : what lowly and simple agencies may be used by our Blessed Saviour to do His work and convey His influence. No doubt, "The Word, Sacraments, and Prayer," are chiefest *Means of Grace* : but they are not the only ones. I believe that the Means of Grace are actually innumerable. I believe that every little thing that helps us is a Means of Grace. That blossoming hawthorn-tree whose beauty and fragrance turned the mind quite away from certain irritative thoughts to something better : that little green hill, treeless, no more than great fields of growing corn, which turned so miraculously verdant in a short-lived gleam of summer light, and smiled in your worn face till the deepened lines went and the heart was calmed and soothed : if Christ used these common things to make you gentler and kinder, to draw you away from a cold and graceless tract of spiritual contemplation : what were they but pleasant Means of Grace ? And it is infinitely touching to see by what small aids human beings bear their burdens and get through their day's work. We are drawn closely and kindly to any mortal, when we come to know his little ways : when we come to know to what a degree he is helped by very little things.

It was no more than a poor 'Busman, driving through the weary London streets, who was recorded on one of my last pages as being sustained through the long afternoon by the prospect of his cup of tea : *something to look forward to*. But some, holding high place, and holding it worthily, would thereupon have hailed that poor 'Busman as a brother. And truly, though the 'Busman's lot be lowly, the kind and wise man to whom he said the words and who repeated them to me, would be recognised by you (if I told you his name), as filling just as exalted a position as man could well hold. And there have been very eminent men who not merely could sympathise heartily with a fellow-mortal helped greatly by a little thing, but who (when you came to know them well) would tell you how much they themselves were helped by little things. Was there ever known by any one who will read this page a wiser and better man than Arthur Helps? I trow not : and I suppose that most of those who knew him would agree with me. There is sometimes an irony in the sound of names : and it is probably best that names should not suggest any meaning. So shall we be delivered from stupid jokes about *The old Story*, and the like. But how many weary and perplexed souls did indeed find help in the author of *Friends in Council* ? And that which he gave, he was content to receive : to receive from any quarter where he could get it. Though he often wrote and talked in a certain playful humour, there was always the foundation of

truth in what he said. And he once wrote, "I confess that life would be somewhat insupportable to me without a pond: a squarish pond, not over-clean." Kindly reader, let us suppose all cynical witnesses away: and let me ask you, confidentially, Have you not your pond? Is there not some little thing in your daily life that fills, for you, the place which was filled by that squarish pond in the life of Sir Arthur Helps? It is many a year since a sturdy shepherd, living in a lonely cottage far among Dumfriesshire hills, said to me, "You may think it a dreary life: but when I come in at evening out of the snow, and sit down by the fire, with *Chambers' Journal* to read, I envy no mortal!" A certain human being, holding just as high a place in this world as can be held by any, who on certain solemn occasions had to read a speech in the hearing of a great assemblage, said, "I should break down, but that I press my knuckles hard into my knees." An eminent preacher once told me that he could not face the heavy strain of ministering to a large congregation of educated folk, but that he always walked to church on the same side of the street, and stood in his vestry upon the same precise spot each Sunday before going into church. You may say, of course, that this is superstition: as when Doctor Johnson felt the day would not go well unless he touched the tops of certain iron posts in Fleet Street as he passed them, and set his feet on the same stones in the pavement as he approached his door. All I say is that it is fact:

and that the like fancies are powerful in the lives of many more people than you would think. "I have my own way of doing things, and I must not be put out of it:" One has heard such words said by very eminent men, discharging very conspicuous functions. A very little bit of green turf, velvet-like: a clump of evergreens, with a great standard rose-tree rising out of it: a short avenue of horse-chestnuts, blazing with the floral illumination of June: two or three great beeches, the smooth bark below, the verdurous cloud above: how much these things have been in the lives of men, not wholly inconsiderable! Indeed, one has remarked that natural beauty, the charm of green grass and green trees, is much more in the life of one who possesses but very little of it, than in the life of those to whom profusion has brought only satiety and insipidity. The grand parks and gardens which charm the transient visitor, are sometimes a mere weariness to such as live among them continually. Thus Providence redresses the awful inequalities in the lot of rich and poor. No one in this world can reckon up the real help and comfort, in bare and suffering lives, that come of the box in the window of a poor dwelling in a stuffy London street: the box bright in the early Spring with crocuses fresh from God, and in the warm Summer-time filling the little chamber with the perfume of homely sweet-peas and mignonette. One little rose-tree, beautiful and fragrant, may fill a great space in the daily life of a tried and disappointed soul.

I have seen the worn face of a dying girl brighten wonderfully at the gift of a few flowers. I remember a poor lad, dying of consumption, sitting by his mother on an old upturned boat by the seaside, and saying with a very wan smile as the summer breeze blew gently upon him, "Ah, this is fine." I never saw him but once: I never heard him speak but these words: and it is more than thirty years since. Did not I, but two days ago, behold one who has his burden both of work and care, sitting in measureless content by the side of a little stream, that brawled over great blocks of red granite in white foam and thunder? All round, rose the everlasting hills: the stream was fringed with brushwood and low trees: the solitude was utter, save for the intrusion of a quiet and little party that had come from far: the fleecy clouds drifted overhead: the sun blazed, glorious as on the First Day. These things sufficed: everything beyond them was put aside for the time. The record is preserved, by a great and loveable genius, of one who (for a little space) was by very perilous means lifted up to a region in which he was victorious over all the ills of this life: which indeed are many. And a prophet of these latter days has no better message to convey as touching these, than that we should keep our mind so busy with hard work that we shall have no time to think of them. Surely it is well that by God's good mercy there are those simple souls to whom

He conveys some little healthful rest and peace by the sound and sight of the amber torrent that tears over the red granite rocks amid lonely Highland heather. Less, indeed, has sufficed. Less touching aspects of Nature have soothed and satisfied a soul, wearied in the great strifes of the great world. It was a cabbage-garden that contented the great Emperor Diocletian, when he had laid the purple aside. The tidy rows, the great bunchy heads, availed to cheer him. And he did not hesitate to say that all this was better than to be the Roman Emperor. O, wearied and worried souls, angered by ills and meannesses you cannot redress, seek the reviving quietness of sacred Nature; and He who made both you and them will calm and help you by green grass and green trees! Furthermore, if you desire to find the Volume that is in deepest sympathy with every aspect of the Creation without and every strange and incommunicable experience of the Soul within you, it is not far to seek. It is the Book of Psalms.

"I like to see anything right: It lightens the mind, Doctor." Such were the words once said to one I know. There was the sad, worn old face. The frailties of age were gathering. The fireside was growing cold. The statement was made in a quiet sorrowful voice. Yet to see and keep little things right was a sober satisfaction. Strict tidiness is a secret of human content. I have set this fully out before: and I am

not going to repeat myself. But I say here, to slatternly and confused folk, Try it. For to diligently see that all you can reach is kept scrupulously Right, is to range yourself in the great Battle of this present state of things.



CHAPTER X.

OF LIFE.

STRICKEN.



HAVE you remarked, as something characteristic of poor humanity, a disposition to use light words in speaking of very grave things? There is no feeling conveyed so touchingly to folk who have had some little experience of this life, as that whose expression is held back: that which is hinted through a veil. A great master of English style once said to me, speaking of his own art, "When I have written a Chapter, I go over it and strike out all superlatives: you have no idea how it strengthens style." I told once, elsewhere, how a dying husband broke what was coming to his poor wife, on whom the awful fear had come of a sudden, and who eagerly put to him the solemn question, by saying "It's on the cards." I told you here how Charles

Kingsley, speaking to a dear friend of a heavy blow, put it lightly in the schoolboy word which used to convey the idea of disciplinary pain : "It's all Toko : and we need Toko." You remember how poor Anne Boleyn, the evening before her execution, jested about her little neck. You know how the broken-hearted Burns talked about his sorrows to a friend in tripping phrases : and added, "Were na' my heart light, I wad die." But there are things so heavy, that you cannot in truth make light of them. It is but the decorous holding back the expression of how much you feel.

I thought of this, a little since, coming away from talking with a good man about a great disappointment which had come to a young relative of his. You do not say in these days, speaking to a world-tried man, of even the bitterest experience which has been appointed to one you care for, "It was like to break his heart." He did not put the thing so. But, though speaking with a very sorrowful face, what he said was only this : "It was a facer. He's bearing it well, but it was a facer." I knew he was taking it and bearing it beautifully : as one man in a hundred does. And, please God, something will come in His time which will quite efface the remembrance of the cloud which came over that young life.

You remember the odd way in which the greatest humorist of this age conveyed the serious idea that a certain man had passed through very heavy and

prolonged trials; and had been made the wiser and better for them. Had the great humorist said what he really felt, it would have sounded too much like a sermon: and *that* could not be. So the solemn fact must be conveyed in light phrase: "Here is a man who has been more beaten about the head than any other that lives." Hence he had come to be wise: hence to be kind and good.

A very great writer of ancient days had the self-same thought in his mind. But he was appointed to write to his fellow-creatures in a fashion which excluded the use of humour. Grave truth must be gravely said by such as he. So he conveyed, in phrase never to be forgotten, that the very Best this world has seen was in some sense made Better by passing through inexpressible sorrow. He, who was Perfection from the first, must be made *Perfect through Sufferings*. There was, indeed, There, no evil to purge out: no selfishness, no littleness, nothing unworthy. It was not with Him as with us poor creatures. Yet even He learnt through suffering what otherwise He could not have quite known: and can, ever since, and evermore, sympathise with us in all trouble and all frailty as one who has "felt the same."

My subject was given me this morning: I cannot do otherwise than write upon it; I have seen that which compels me. Besides the lesser worries, James Montgomery's "insect cares," there comes to

most, now and then, the heavy blow which strikes down: or, to say the least, under which one staggers. How shall one dare, month by month, to write to many tried men and women *Of Life*, yet say nothing of this awful fact? God teach us, here, somewhat to help one another. Under the common trouble that comes day by day, you try to go on with your work as usual: though you must do it, many times, with a confused head, and a heavy heart. But here, you must stop, definitively. All ordinary concerns and interests are not, for a space, when the great blow comes. I have been reading the *Life* of one I knew: poet and humorist: whose pages have touched and cheered very many. Ah, the sad, gentle, quiet man (at least in the latter years), who stirred such mirth in others: such laughter,—yes, and such tears. It was his way to say little of his troubles. But the day came when he had to burst out, writing to a dear friend:

“You, my dear James, who know me, will not think what I write now, a strange medley compared with the nonsense I have penned above. But she really seemed very ill, and she spoke and looked like an angel; was so sweet, kind, affectionate, and resigned, that I felt as if my heart would have burst: and the awful thought that I might soon be left alone in this world, without the companionship of one who for ten years has been dearer to me and more blessed to me than words can express, smote me with a sense

of desolation. I have endeavoured not to repine. I know that God sends His chastisements in mercy, not in wrath : that what He does for us is the best. I have prayed, and in praying have received that consolation that, in the event of the worst, I hope I shall be able to bend to the rod."

Coming where they do, the lines impress one with an awful sense of reality. But when it comes to the question which concerns ourselves, How shall we take the heavy blow, one's heart and words fail. No human skill can tell us how the blow can be so taken that we shall not reel under it : yes, go down into the dust for a while. You will just have to go through the dark : to feel the heart like lead within you : to dree your weird. For though that loveable genius spoke so fairly of praying for God's help and getting it : though he faced his sorrow manfully, and wrestled with it : said he must take to his work again, and worked hard ; yet one who loved him (and who has followed him) had to say, "Night after night, I used to call in upon him : and anything more melancholy than our old bright companion, sitting with his head leaning on his hands, cheerless and helpless, I never saw." And another writes, "He was no longer the same man, and it seemed from his looks as if in a few months he had passed through years of suffering." Yet I have myself seen what for a time, not a short time, was sadder. I have seen a gentle nature hardened into a bitter defi-

ance, in which all that was sweet and submissive was gone : in which the beautiful face looked at you stonily ; and there was no ear for words of consolation : in which the only fact was unutterable and unrelieved misery. Shall I forget how another, a gray-headed man, strong, brave, an earnest Christian, and a helper of many, on one bitter day said to me, in tones quietly desolate, "I really can't say that God is good, because I don't think He is." But the blessing of re-union soon came : and he knows that God is good, now.

Let a word be interposed here. One thing is sure. You know better, after the heavy stroke has fallen upon yourself, how to feel for others in sorrow. You understand, quite differently, what they are going through. Not but what we forget things soon : like the old story of Christ's salvation, which we all need to hear over and over, is the sorrowful experience which keeps us up to the pitch of truly sympathising with others. It must be repeated : and indeed it is. I confess, penitently, that when a friend at much length told me, but yesterday, of a great trouble which had come to him (though not the greatest), I did not feel for him as I ought. You do not take such things in, somehow. But, coming away, I tried to realise how I should have borne it myself. The thing greatened on one's view : the sharp thorn seemed to reach the quick : and I was ashamed and penitent. How easily other folk take what was the terrible "facer" to some

hopeful lad, that crushed a cherished hope, and made him sit down quite beaten for the time! For the stroke may be very heavy, though it be short of that which you wonder how poor human beings live through. The thoughts which are in my mind as I write this are in all likelihood quite different from those which are in the mind of most readers of this page: but probably they are exactly the same as those which are present to some few, warmly concerned in just the same young lads as I am. But we all see very heavy blows fall: we see human hearts sorely stricken. "I am sorry for him," you say: but the sorrow is very transient, and not very real or deep. I speak of really kind and unselfish people. There is much worse. "It will do him good," one has known a coarse and uncultured mortal say, jauntily: "It will take him down: he needs it." Perhaps he does, poor young fellow: *you* unquestionably do, my thick-skinned and half-educated acquaintance, now present to my mind. No doubt St. Paul's Thorn in the Flesh did him good: no doubt he needed it all: he tells us so. But be sure, it did him good *afterward*: it did him good after very painful experience had been gone through. And while *he* needed to be humbled because he had been caught up into Paradise, I have known some who needed it a good deal more after having been lifted to a very inferior elevation. Few things make me more angry than to hear the judi-

cious wire-puller or the blatant public talker say that the bitter disappointment of a sanguine youth will *do him good*. I have remarked that such rejoice only in the blessing which at first looks black as a curse: and I will believe they rejoice rather in the pain which is certain, than in the profit which may or may not come of it. It is an evil sign of our nature, too, that sometimes we hear of a blow which has fallen upon one who has grown old, and is little able to bear it: and we laugh at it. I was but a boy then: but I remember, vividly, an old gentleman relating with much enjoyment, as a comic story, the consternation of a poor old Scotch professor when an awful account was presented to him which he had not the money to pay. Even as a boy, though I durst not speak, I rebelled in spirit against that heartless fun. It was no laughing matter to the poor old man: it was a knock-down blow. And to expatiate on the oddity of his looks and words under it, as matter of amusement, appeared to me then (and appears to me now) as cruel and wicked. You have remarked, too, that heavy blows tend to fall on poor mortals when they are specially weak, and unable to bear them: likewise to come together. A great genius, in a story true to life, and not to what we wish were true, had to say, "It was another blow upon the stricken man." The letter comes with as heavy news as can come to you in this world: there are those to whom post-time is a time of daily appre-

hension. The telegram comes: even yet an awful sight to some quiet folk, for too good reasons. And one thinks of the proverbial blow upon the head, the centre of nerve and life, as the only thing to which the experience can be likened. Under it, you drop. You must get aside, at any rate. You must be alone: alone with God (if that may be), and your great sorrow. And you must bear: bear. That is all, at the first.

How shall we take it: take it that we may live through it, that we may be sanctified by it? Will any one tell? Tell us how to minister to the stricken soul? For, after having tried to do so, many times, through many years, I cannot pretend to instruct another. I have known one to whom the news was brought that her betrothed had gallantly died in battle, who, when all around were silent, fell upon her knees and cried aloud, "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken,"—the whole sentence, like Job. I have heard a poor Scotch labouring man, told his son was dead, say the self-same words. But bitter hours had to be lived through, afterwards. "I am very rebellious:" as good a Christian as ever lived said that to me, when his young wife died. I suppose the only thing is to get apart, into perfect solitude, and to spread it all out before Christ: ah, happy indeed, if you can feel you are indeed doing so. "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth: because Thou didst it." We can get no farther. That is all.

And He is Wisest : and He is Kindest : we hold by that, in the darkness. Long ago, a lad of twenty, born to broad lands and with a sweet nature, was standing on a rock in a river I know, with several young friends about. He staggered, and fell into a deep pool. He was a good swimmer. No one feared : there was a laugh at the little misfortune. They waited for his reappearing. But he did not reappear. He was gone from wealth and hope. One had to go in and tell his old father, in the beautiful house hard by. There is no breaking such news. "I have brought you bad news, sir." "My son is dead!" Father and son are together again, many a year since. But it fell to one I know to preach to the bereaved, more than two or three, the Sunday after the lad was laid in his grave. He was a young minister ; but it seemed as though there were but one text, and little to be said upon it. It was the Psalmist's experience, when he was stricken : true, through all these ages : true, till there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither any more pain. "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth : because Thou didst it!"

Then, by the kind grace of the Holy Spirit, you will not get snappish, bitter, cynical : rather very mild and sympathetic and subdued. You will take it rightly. You will take it from Christ. Ah, you have seen people soured by great trial, as well as sweetened. It will be according to your own nature:

rather according to God's grace, and your own endurance, and endeavour. Says St. Augustine, "Tribulation comes, it will be as ye choose it, either an exercise or a condemnation. Tribulation is a fire: Does it find thee gold? it takes away the dross: Does it find thee chaff? it turns it to ashes." Very simply said: but more awful words were never written.

No doubt, it has pleased God to permit that some of the very best of our Race should die, broken-hearted. You remember the gentle St. Margaret, and the last message brought to her: "Your husband and your son are both slain." And thanking God humbly for this last bitter stroke which loosened the last links to this life, the saintly queen turned her face to the wall and died. Far lower in the transient rank of this present world, one has known aged Christian folk, men and women, so stript of all worldly hope, so burdened with irremediable trouble,—ay, and so sure of better things Above,—that at the last, one did not wish to keep them here. It was better, far better, to go from this troublesome life; and begin anew, hopeful and young, holy and blessed, far away. I have stood over more dying beds than one or two, where the words came to me of the greatest uninspired human genius: though I said them only to myself:

"Vex not his ghost: O let him pass! He hates him,
That would, upon the rack of this tough world,
Stretch him out longer!"



CHAPTER XL

OF LIFE.

AFTER ALL THESE YEARS.



ONE looks round, sometimes, on the moving company of the people one knows; and one looks back over the way one has come through life: and one thinks, How are the years telling upon us all?

I am not thinking, now, of those who, as time has gone on, have broken down being old folk, or have dropt down being young or middle-aged; and who are no longer among us here. Very many are gone, and the ranks have closed up: those who abide (in many cases) holding the more kindly together. You get frightened lest, when days have passed over, you may know again the sharp self-upbraiding for lack of the kindness, in word and deed, which might have been shewn to one who has gone beyond the reach of it.

But, How are the years telling on us who are still going on?

It seems to me as if the people one knows abide much the same, year after year. It is long before you remark any material difference, in middle-aged folk, even on form and feature. The change comes so gradually, in the process of growing old, that it is hardly seen by such as see us every day. But it is not that change which is in my mind. I am thinking of the moral and spiritual man and woman. It seems to me that such as I know remain in temper, in sense, in the entire idiosyncrasy, just what they were sixteen years ago: twenty-two years ago. It has happened in my little career that these were epochs at which I had to make up my mind what I should think of a great many human beings. You will not fancy that I am advancing any claim whatsoever to any special power of discerning character: nearly every mortal I ever came to know was very easily read: but I do say, speaking what I doubt not is the experience of nearly every one who will ever read this page, that I have hardly ever had to reverse the estimate speedily formed, and very seldom to materially modify it. The untruthful person is untruthful still: the vapouring, boastful person, vapours still: the cantankerous-tempered is true to the promise of his youth. And again, the sweet-natured, kindly soul, that delighted to do you a service: the man of high principle, incapable of

an unworthy deed : the sagacious man, of that fine astuteness which has not in it a shade of trickery ; these all abide the same. We are all subjected, day by day, certainly week by week, to certain influences which are designed to make us better : but, as plain matter of fact, I cannot say they do. They may keep us from growing worse : but that seems to be all.

But, while good people, still in health and strength, and going through their daily work, do not appear to grow better, I cannot but think that bad people, in the process of the years, tend to grow worse. Rather let it be said, The bad qualities which are in human beings tend to get aggravated. For we do not much tend, as experience grows, to divide mankind sharply into the Good and Evil : we are a mixed race. There is a great deal of evil in the best, and (let us hope) some touch of goodness in things most evil. But it appears to be a rule of God's Universe, that while what is normal and right may go on for a long time without apparent change, if anything be wrong, it tends in the process of time to become worse, till it ends by being very bad indeed. You who have had the ill-fortune to have to do with horses, know that once the very slightest lameness is there, lameness so slight that (as a horse-dealer once said to me) "you don't see it, but the like of Huz sees it,"—it is a mere question of time till that lameness be dead, and direful. And one has seen, with deep

sorrow, how the all but imperceptible deformity in a little child grows with that little one's growth, till it turns to something that makes the work of life be done (though sometimes done bravely and nobly) at sad disadvantage. One has known, indeed, a heroic soul, beautiful in its manifestation on the worn face both of man and woman, in a misshapen frame. And the work of the world has never been done more grandly than when everything was against those who did it. Even so, does moral evil in any human soul tend to grow always worse. The temper which was bad in youth, has grown intolerable in middle life, and diabolical in age. The miserable tendency to tell falsehoods seems to leaven the soul through. At first, the lie was ready in self-excuse, or for self-laudation: after years, it comes without motive, as though the unhappy soul would rather speak falsehood than truth. The disposition to mischief-making, to that wretched tale-bearing which ever since Solomon's days has separated friends, naturally grows: but that happily here a restraining influence comes into play. For, now and then, the tale-bearer and mischief-maker tells the story to the wrong person; or is found out by one concerned: and so gets into trouble which frightens and deters for some little time.

Now there is something sad about all falling-off: all Deterioration. It is sad when a man's worldly circumstances fall off in his failing years. One

would wish them always to get better. He was a wise and good man who said that he would have some little lift, in means or honour, come to aging folk every three years. In fact, the lift does not come: Rather the burden tends (in divers cases) to grow heavier when the poor soul is growing less able to bear it. One has known (have not you?) troubles, mortifications, cares, gather upon an old man who had his better years of fame and fortune. And there is no particular comfort, when life is closing in gloom, in the remembrance of happier things, all gone. Of course, God's way is right. But, to say the truth, we should alter it if we could. And when He puts it into our heart to mend the natural course of events, is not the way in which He has formed our heart to point us, in the most real and solemn truth, His way? I ask you, Which is God's doing, the awful agony of some excruciating disease; or the blessed antidote which He taught some good and wise man to find amid the stores of His creation? The antidote, I say: and will say. I know, and am sure, Where everything Good comes from. Where Evil comes from, I do not know at all. But I know perfectly well WHERE it does NOT come from.

It is sad to feel strength, activity, capacity of work, lessening. We try hard to persuade ourselves that after all these years they abide undiminished. Or, if the attempt to walk at four miles an hour up a

steep hill should in ten minutes compel a man who has turned fifty to know that it is not with him as of yore in the matter of bodily agility, he comforts himself by maintaining that in power of intellectual labour he is better than ever. One remembers Dean Alford's declaration that a man ought to be thankful for each day of tolerable health given to him after fifty years in this world. And John Foster says that Pope would have been sadly beaten down if he had discerned that he could not write better at fifty than he had done at twenty. Yet, spite of all soothing self-deception, hours will come, as you go on, in which you will see, very plainly, that vitality is burning low; and that the ancient buoyancy and hopefulness are gone, or come fitfully and rarely. One sees how lined and anxious the faces of aging men and women grow: specially of those to whom is appointed the trial (which is appointed to nearly every one I know) of narrow means. I have heard a thoughtful man say, Here is the tragedy of modern life. And in the presence of sordid calculations, when the great task of life yearly has turned to the making of the ends to meet, there seems something unreal and fanciful in that deterioration which Wordsworth has described so touchingly in what many will call his greatest Poem. Yet, of a truth, unless where outward circumstances are awfully adverse (which indeed they are for very many little ones I know) "Heaven lies about us in our infancy:" the "shades of the prison-

house" gather on the growing boy: and the anxious man sees the glories of the dawn of our life "fade into the light of common day." That is all true: but you must be placed upon a certain level that you may mind it much: and I have known many a widowed woman, left such when the first threads of gray were hardly apparent in her hair, who would have cried, Oh let the romance of life go and welcome, if I could but make sure of supporting and educating my little fatherless boys. The terrible facts of life weigh on heart and head till the spring of either is broken. Many a year since, I remember hearing one of the cleverest women I ever knew say, Once I hoped for brightness and romance: now, I am perfectly content if I find *a way of doing*. The phrase was unfamiliar. But, on enquiry, it appeared that the idea conveyed by it was one more gracefully given by a tramp of a long-past age, when he said how thankful he would be "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on." Yes: even with such things assured forty-nine out of every fifty of those among whom I live would be well content. And with divers, placed at a different worldly elevation, the heart has entirely ceased to beat high for praise; and is careful and troubled about the great question of the procuring of bread and (if it may be) of butter.

But far sadder than any other deterioration coming

after all these years, is moral and spiritual degeneration. It is a terrible thing to feel that we are not so good as we used to be. If we were growing wiser and better, we could bear being less agile and beautiful, less esteemed and less well-to-do. For in such a case, our life would not be a failure on the whole : rather a cheering success. Now, I do not know how it may be with you, my reader : but I know that with very many Christian people there is the grievous sense of having spiritually fallen off ; at the least, there is the never-ceasing self-reproach that spite of all helps and means no progress whatsoever is made, year after year. Do not you often feel as though your faults were never cured ? Being tried, you fail, just as before. It seems as though your moral nature, in presence of temptation, were as certain to fail, as wax is to melt being exposed to a certain heat. And if even you discern all that about yourself, how plainly must those around you discern it ! There is an old Scotch phrase, about "stirring up one's corruption : " it is very expressive. An unkind person, of very moderate intuition, can get at a man of warm heart and fluent speech : and make him say in haste what he will regret at leisure. The only comfort one has, is that, in the judgment of all good and wise people, the tempter is condemned a hundred times as severely as the tempted. I remember, long ago, being present when an orthodox divine set himself to stir up one who was many years younger and

some degrees less *sound*, in the presence of a certain company. The orthodox man was probably right: the unsound youth was certainly irritated into putting himself most conspicuously in the wrong. But the orthodox man was one of those hard, uncultured, ignorant, provoking souls whose function in life is to make all warm-hearted folk hate whatever doctrine they maintain: the unsound was a man a thousand degrees his better both in brain and heart. The spirit was right where the dogma was wrong: in the mortal who was dogmatically right there was no vestige of any spiritual element at all. But, the debate having ended, amid ruffled feeling in all present, and the bitter sense of unfairness, one who was there, wise and good as are very few in one generation, and of certified orthodoxy, spoke to me in keen condemnation not of the unsound being but of the sound. "I am mistaken," said he, "if that man is not capable of repeating all this to our young friend's hurt." Just two days afterwards, I found that the man was capable of exactly that: because he had gone and done it. He fancied he was *showing up* the youth to whom he had acted the part of tempter. But, in the judgment of all worthy folk, he exhibited himself in a light most grievous. In my book, a black cross went to his name. Had he seen it, he would have gone about talking of *Ritualism*. "The worm must do his kind."

This is a digression: let us go back. There is

a sad conviction in many souls that they have deteriorated and are deteriorating. And it seems to have been always so. "Oh that I were as in months past:" "What peaceful hours I once enjoyed:" is not *that* the strain of much which has been said and written? I know, that here is a case in which it is natural to judge hardly of one's self, in certain moods. But, not forgetting that, the experience expressed so often must (in so far) found upon fact. The heart grows less warm. The mind turns suspicious. The generous impulse is repressed. The kind word is kept back: when you have once learned how it was repeated, misrepresented, and laughed at. It is very difficult, in this world, not to grow worse, through the sorrowful experience of years.

I do not call it deterioration, even though you have lost something that was pleasant, if you have advanced by natural growth to something farther on, which could not, by necessity of nature, coexist with the something lost. You cannot have the blossom and the fruit together: and the fruit is an advance upon the blossom, beautiful and fragrant as that was in the sunshiny May. These golden fields I see, looking up from this page, are, after all, better than the fresh green that looked through the soil and spoke to the heart, months ago. Even so, though you often remember, with a sigh, the rosy little face of your little boy or girl, the warm heart, the simple sayings which so touch you yet, still, when they have grown out of all that into the fair promise of their

youth, in the main the change is for the better. Something, indeed, is lost; something that was beautiful in its season. There come to you the words of Shakespeare, "I cannot but remember such things were, That were most precious to me." And when you are by yourself, the looks and words come back, that are gone for evermore. You need not pretend but that you have wished that nobody would ever grow older; and (of course) that nobody would ever die. But you know in yourself that all this is weakness, is folly. In this state of being, there is no standing still: "the things which are seen are temporal." And, as long as they are growing, you try to be content. The day must come when they will fade.

But there is deterioration which is unrelieved: which no philosophy can dress up to look hopeful. It does not come often: but it has come into the life of most of us who are doing the work of life. You remember a bright lad at College: thoughtless, and lacking stedfastness: yet loveable and attractive: with divers accomplishments which made his society be sought after a good deal more than yours ever was: you remember the smiling face, the frank address, the pleasant voice. You had lost sight of him for years; and you sometimes wondered where he was, though not with curiosity enough to lead to active inquiry. Ah, is this he, all that was good in him gone, all that was uncertain in his character developed to its very worst? You are sitting, some

evening, at your work, when a poor fellow is shown in, shabby, with trembling hands and an abashed face, and with the awful smell about him of that Poison which ruins so many a Scotchman (and Scotchwoman) in body and soul. Of course, it is easy to make a joke of it: and there never was a cause which has suffered like the cause of Temperance from the intolerant and intolerable foolishness of its advocates. But to me, with reason you would think sufficient if I told it to you, the smell of Whisky is associated indissolubly with degradation, misery, ruin: and that *not* of the humblest. He reminds you who he is: ah, it is in the peculiar phrase and tone which indicate the habitual beggar. He begins by saying he is in some little temporary strait: but meeting kindness which he has not met for long, he ends by bursting out and telling you he is starving. No, I will not go on: I cannot. Here is a case in which in a small country like Scotland one must not even hint at the facts which are in one's mind. All I say is, that far more than twice or thrice such an experience has come to me. In my study, and on the street far from home, I have seen and heard things which are like to break one's heart. Ah, to recal the hopeful and respectable Past, and then look upon the awful Present! You know the threadbare coat, the unshaven face, the blood-shot eyes. And, pervading everything, saturating body and soul, *invariably* the sodden, sickening sense of the presence of Whisky!

Ay, and some day, passing the Police Station, you find a little crowd : and you learn that they have the corpse of the poor suicide within.

There are things too awful to think of. There is evil in this world which seems remediless. We go away from all that ; only thinking how He who knew our frame bade every human creature pray *Lead us not into temptation.* But, without going to such depths, all have known a deterioration which was sorrowful enough. Was there some one you knew, knew tolerably well, of whom you lost sight, and after ten or fifteen years met him once more? Even the face and the expression were changed : but the soul was beyond recognition. For things had gone against him : and moral stamina was lacking. The good-natured lad had turned into a wrong-headed, quarrelsome man, not entirely sober, not entirely honest. It is not the same being at all. The old acquaintance is dead and buried. And it was not that he was a whit worse than nineteen in twenty : It was that he had been unlucky. For if it be true that were human beings better, they would be happier, no less certain is it that were human beings happier, they would be better.

But it is a day of rain and storm. The trees, though not a leaf has fallen, are battling with a wintry blast, and the unreaped corn is waving wildly. I have

arrived at a point from which the outlook is no less dreary: and many sorrowful things are pressing themselves on my memory. I must stop: and consider whether or not I shall tell you of them. If I do so at all, it shall be on a more hopeful day in this cold, bleak summer.



CHAPTER XII.

OF LIFE.

CRITICAL PERIODS AND NEW LEASES.



YOU used to smile, no doubt, when some old or aging man, in the thankful sense that things had somewhat brightened, that heart and foot were not so heavy, told you that he had taken *a new lease of life*. You thought it weakness and fancy. There is no harder thing than for the young to sympathise with the old : for the light-hearted to put themselves in the place of the care-worn and weary. But you have found out for yourself, as you went on, the meaning of the phrase. You have discovered that it expresses a pleasant reality.

There are critical times in our life, when the question is *Shall I go or stay?* The entire machinery, physical and psychical, seems to ask, *Shall I stop, or shall I go on yet awhile?* These critical times come

in two fashions. There may be a quiet failure of strength and vitality. There may be sudden and severe illness.

We all know how at the fatal thirty-seven great geniuses tend to break down and die: those human beings whose work is a heavy pull upon the more ethereal powers of body and soul. Great poets, painters, and musicians, are worn-out at that age: and they go. This is a fact which is sustained by a very wide and startling induction of instances. It is strange, it is sad, but it is certain, that the finest-strung human natures break down the soonest. They were not made for long wear. Mozart and Mendelssohn, Raphael, Byron, and Burns, had but this little share of troublesome life.

Then, for brain-driving men who are not sensitive geniuses, but hard-driven doers of this world's everyday prosaic work, forty-five is the critical time. I remember well the day when a very eminent man of science told me this: and how I suddenly ran over the names of a dozen of the cleverest men I knew; and found that even in one's own little experience the fact was so. You call it brain-weariness, failure of nervous energy: some folk talk of the mucous membrane. The meaning of all this simply is that there comes a general breaking-up, which (curiously) means the same thing as a general breaking-down. Then it is that I remark how this man and that gets leave of absence from his duty for six months or a year:

and goes away, pretty much broken-hearted, to milder regions where all is strange to him : and whence he returns or does not return, as may be. There are three possibilities, my scientific friend told me, when a brain-worker has thus broken-down : and let it be said, I have since remarked how many break down almost to the very day. The simplest alternative is, that the poor worn-out over-worker dies. And then, I have seen with a sore heart those who depended on him begin to practise something of that economy and self-denial which (begun sooner) might have saved brain and heart, and kept him here. The next possibility is, that the worn-out man drags on his life for a few years longer, and even struggles to do his work : but everything is a burden, the buoyancy and hopefulness are gone, the temper is irritable and wayward, every prospect is gloomy, and life is a miserable load. The third possibility is that which I wish God may send to every one who may read this page, if this critical time fall heavy upon him : and well I know that many who will read this page are of those who specially run the risk of it. It is that the man gets perfectly well again : gets through the darkness out into God's good sunshine : is far fitter and stronger for his work than he ever was before : feels a delight in his work beyond all experience, and finds it strangely easy : discerns a true zest and enjoyment in each little detail of the daily round of existence : is undisturbed by noises, and good-

Critical Periods and New Leases. 117

natured with stupid and blundering folk : thinks it, like Paley, "a happy world after all : " in brief, takes a new lease of life.

And while new leases are for the most part on less favourable terms for the tenant, it is not so here. There is no dropping down to a lower level. One has known life far brighter and warmer at fifty than it was at twenty-five.

I know that you may say, if you be a robust soul, that all this about critical periods is fanciful. You may ask, Why break down at these more than at any other time ? You may say, in all kindness and good faith, to a dwining and dispirited mortal, growing weekly more languid and desponding, Don't give in : Fight against it : Keep your mind healthily occupied : Think how much depends on your life, and don't be selfish : Work for others if not for yourself. Most readers have known worthy but unsympathetic people, whose prescription for every emergency was, *Exert yourself : Make an effort !* But how if you cannot ? How, if you spur ever so hard, and there is no responsive effort : only the dreary wish to creep aside and give up altogether ? If strength has indeed failed, it will not do to make believe very much, and fancy that this will suffice. There is no fighting against facts : and a wise man will not try to ignore them. Acknowledge them : Mend them : Make the best of them : *This* is the way. And as for the question one has heard put, Why break down at

forty-five more than at any other age? it is a silly one, and heartless. Why should I see, on this tenth day of September, on some of these trees the first tinge of Autumn, while all the rest are green? Beautiful and fragrant linden, why are you the first to fade? Why have these great expanses on which I look down, climbing this height, turned yellow; though with little sunshine to make them so? Why, when a few weeks are gone, will all these leaves change, then wither and fall? Why, but because the season comes when these changes must be. The Creator's Fiat, I say: Or if you will have it, the laws of nature have appointed so. Even so is it with us human beings. Times and seasons are appointed to us, as to all things: and we cannot fight against them, however resolute and brave we may be. And some of us are neither very resolute nor very brave.

I have said, there are two ways in which the Critical Period comes.

We may gradually feel, we do not know why, all our work growing harder, losing interest, turning to a heavy burden. You know the meaning of the pathetic phrase, to *lose heart*. You shirk exertion. The day comes when really you must sit down, where you used to stand. You find in yourself the capacity (it is very strange) to sit for an hour under a group of trees in the warm still Autumn day, or at evening in your chair by the winter fire, vacant: doing nothing, thinking of nothing: in a semi-conscious

state. Do you remember a Scotch story, in which an ancient Laird is described as "sitting on his ain loupin'-on stane, glowering frae him"? At the last, after weeks of failing strength, the memorable day comes to folk whose work must be done by considerable effort, on which your work cannot be done at all, whether well or badly: you are beaten at last, and must definitively stop. You send for the Doctor: a hard thing for most men to do. He speaks of long over-work: of nervous weariness, of vital exhaustion: He lays you aside from your occupation, possibly not for so very long: though three or four weeks sometimes have seemed a most extended season. Possibly he tells you that you "must go to grass for a long time:" which (unless you be very ill indeed) you absolutely refuse to do. You say you cannot do it: you cannot be spared: you must work on somehow. You make terms: the good man sees that to send you away would, as things are, bring such trouble that it is better you abide, taking all duty as lightly as may be. Even what must be done is for many months done very heavily and heartlessly; and your temper is a trial to many. Yet you pull through. You turn the corner at length. There is a very slow process, in the recovering of strength and tone. But after half a year or (it may be) a year under the cloud, you find yourself going out and in amid a glow of vigour and cheerfulness. All you have to do is easy, is encouraging: Everything

you put your hand to prosper. Sometimes, looking back, you wonder if that breaking-down was not half-fanciful: Might you not have fought it? But this is delusion. Weakness and illness, God be thanked, are quite forgot when they have passed away. But they were awfully real when they were present. You have got a new lease of life. O make the most of it. It may not be for very long.

There is the other way in which the memorable experience may come to you: the way of sudden and sharp suffering. The morning comes whereon, having gone about burning and shivering for two or three days, you say you must stay in bed for just a day and get rid of this bad cold. Even a day in bed is to many men a thing not easily permitted. But it is not a bad cold. It is Fever: burning fever in which mind and memory go. It is fierce inflammation of some vital organ, of whose existence in you you were hardly aware before. There is no fighting such things as these. You, never a day in bed beyond two or three in all your life: you, who just recently had said (not boastingly but thankfully) that you had never been away from your work for a fortnight together through many years; have now to lie prostrate through week after week, often in acute suffering, soon in deadly weakness, knowing for the first time the awful and indescribable experiences of that which people so easily name as *Delirium*. "He's off his head," you have many a time been

told, in a house of sickness : "he is wandering." And you said, "Poor fellow, it is very sad !" and went away. You will know now, you will remember vividly while you live, how strange a fact the easily-said words express : through what weird and weariful tracts of thought and feeling a poor human soul may have to go. If you have lived a decent life, thank God that strangeness and weariness will be the worst : you will not have the ghastly, loathsome, and frightful apparitions which come to those who have treated brain and nerve with awful alcohol, body and soul with degrading and unspeakable sin. In a little, all ordinary cares will cease. Let but the iron grip of pain grasp you tight enough, and what a selfish, narrow creature you will grow : all you will wish will be to be delivered from this torture : all the world will be the little chamber within which you have to suffer. At the first, there will be the terrible sense, that the house, the children, the parish, cannot go on without you : it is not through self-conceit you think so, but because you know that of a truth every day brings you so much to do : Ah, that long list of things to be done next day which you made up the night before you lay down on the bed whence you may never rise. But these things have to go. Get low enough down, and they all pass from your poor relaxing grasp. You will find with a start, how quickly, even without the shock of fatal accident, a man may die : how little is our hold to life. But,

though it has come with far less warning than you vaguely thought it would, you will quite reconcile your mind to going. And, when the turn comes, you will truly have come back from the grave. You had worried yourself, in that awful weakness, to a degree of which nobody knew, in thinking where you should be buried: you could not make up your mind. You would let others determine. And you had had terrible cares as to how "They" would do without you: "They," who are all the world to you. If a few years more could have been given! "Yes, mother, but I should like to get better:" so a dying schoolboy said, very near the end. That had gone from you. It was what holy Bishop Andrewes prayed for: "a Christian close, without fear, and if it may be, without pain." It was the wildest of dreams that you should ever be at work again: That was all past: and what a poor thing the work of a diligent life seemed! Never you talk to me, as ignorant mortals do, about the calm approval of a good conscience in the retrospect of a well-spent life. *That* is delusion. What poor trust there is, is not *there*. As for the amusements of life, as for the engagements of society, how impossible, in the thought of the End that must come to everybody, that time or thought should ever be given to these! Such are the seasons in which you are dependent, as a little infant is dependent, on human kindness and patience. A very little neglect; and you would be away. You will learn

more than you ever knew before of the self-sacrifice of which some are capable. And the sympathy of many, near and far, is real and inestimable.

You are not to go. Change for the better comes. Strange, to walk across your room, and find you cannot, save by holding on. Strange, when you can take food again. You are ashamed that you enjoy it so much, and anticipate it so eagerly. You had once rebuked (gently) a schoolboy, who told you how lying in his bed in Germany, he often thought what it would be to have ham and eggs for breakfast again. Strange, to come downstairs : quitting the little room which for these weeks had been all your world. Strange, the first time you are again in the open air : tottering feebly for fifty yards. Strange, the first time you are in God's house. You feel you never valued it as you ought, when you had it habitually through all your life till now. And if your vocation be to instruct your fellows, you bring back, from these weeks of cessation, several messages, not otherwise known. You had gone, very often, into a sickroom : you had talked with the sufferer lying there : but coming, in firm health, from the outside engagements and interests, you did not know how different a thing existence is in that hushed apartment : you never quite realised the long days, the terribly long nights, which were going over, there. You had not at all taken in how, in divers forms of illness, there is great difficulty in taking the consola-

tions of religion : how, in great suffering, and notably, in fever, there are stages in which you try to read books ; and dislike them ever after. The awful taste of inflammation, of fever, which makes all food nauseous, reaches to what you read too. Ay, the Best of books is a good deal affected : and the beloved Psalms are not quite what they used to be. When life revives, one of the first and pleasantest signs is, that the Sunday, though still in the sickroom, is a blessing : it was a disappointment, for a while : and the Psalms smile in your face and fall on your ear as of old. You sometimes had doubted, rather awfully, whether the consolations of God were really anything at all to you : you feared, with a sinking heart, that you could be devout and resigned only when all goes well : but that you did but break down sorrowfully when the strain and pressure come.

They are trying, the days through which, strength being so far revived, you must stand and wait : being eager to take to work again, but wisely forbidden. But the time comes, at length, when the task is again taken in hand ; amid many kind looks and welcomes. You were always valued just about as much as you deserve : Now, for a while, you are valued far more. All work is a delight. It is curious, for a little, to come upon many things you had provided for future use, which might never have been needed. Some one else might have found them ; and looked at them with a sigh. But you know, indeed, the meaning of

a New Lease of Life. You will be aware, now, that the illness which laid you prostrate had in fact been coming upon you for long. The evil is purged out of you : and there is a buoyancy unknown for many weeks and months gone by. Your duty was never so easy : never so cheering. It seems as if kindness and charity towards all you know were the pleasant outcome of restored health. You have a wonderfully keen sense of the beauty of reviving nature : a fresh wonder at the words and ways of little children. If feeling be the great fact, you are of a truth younger than for many a year. There is a singular re-awakening of cheerful interest in all the little details of life : and there is no greater worldly blessing than this homely one. For little details make the sum of life. No holiday, however long and reviving : none at least that you have ever known ; sends you back to your occupation with that freshened interest which comes of the enforced withdrawal from it all of three months of serious illness. Go, then, and enjoy the New Lease vouchsafed you : Go and improve it. Work, rest, enjoy, endure : Occupy till He come.

One last word : You have had a glimpse of what it will be when you must go : a glimpse which is very cheering, and a great relief ; unless you be singularly selfish and self-conceited. *They will be able to do without you.* The World, perfectly. The Parish, very fairly. The House, quite wonderfully. For which you thank God.



CHAPTER XIII.

OF PARTING COMPANY.



YOU have had your breakfast, and are now sitting down at your writing-table to begin the forenoon's work, when you are subjected to a brief interruption.

A little boy of eight years, with a fat and rosy face, comes in ; and in a loud voice exclaims "Good-bye !" He is going to school, where he must be at ten o'clock. According to daily wont, you hasten to the window, and see the little man set forth. He issues from the door, then looks round, and solemnly waves his hand. Then he turns his face to his own burden, which none can share. He has his own world, a heavy enough world for his little strength : he must face it, alone. No mortal can share all his experiences. He is anxious, as you mark him trotting along till he is out of sight, how he is to get on at

school that day ; not knowing (any more than the distinguished person known as ST. PAUL did) "how it may go with him." Possibly he has got into some inconceivably little scrape, about which he would not on any account tell anybody : and he is burdened with the fear that things may never come right any more. Possibly he has had some small difference with a contemporary ; and is perplexing himself how the quarrel is to be made up, or continued and aggravated. The lesson of the day may weigh heavily : the difference between an adverb and a preposition appearing beyond human comprehension. You go back to your work,—which he knows nothing about ; and the little man goes his own way.

That is the beginning. Ah, the beginning was here, a good while earlier. As soon as an individual being begins to consciously be, the individual being begins to part company with all being besides : begins to go on alone. We may try to keep together in this life : some of us try to do so, hard : but it is vain. Our personality must needs separate us, separate us widely, from every other person. There are points, points in time, points in interest, at which we seem to touch others : we exchange thoughts, and in a measure each sees for the moment how the other fares, and feels. But in the larger part by far of the inward experience of every day, we are quite alone. Hard work, notably, is a very solitary thing : so is worry. And language, after all, is but a rude and imperfect

instrument to convey the shades of human thought and feeling.

But it is not the condition of our being that is to be the subject of the present dissertation. We are not going to think of that, any more than we allow ourselves to think of a good many things. It is moral cowardice, doubtless, not to look things full in the face; but then most thoughtful folk are moral cowards. The writer, notably. Intellectually and morally, a good deal of one's time is spent in looking the other way: if that may not be, then in shutting the eyes, resolutely. The topic of present thought is the fashion in which, from very near the beginning, circumstances push those apart who would earnestly wish to keep together.

At this point it is inevitable that something be said as to the surroundings amid which these lines are written. For they are strange: and the writer, like some few of the human beings he knows, among unfamiliar scenes is a different person. Many days hence (if such days are given) this hour and that prospect will come vividly back; and the lonely feeling of the place and time. For, having sadly parted company to-day, after ten days together, with a friend whose face may not be seen again for long, he has come as a solitary pilgrim to this beautiful spot among the green fields and trees of Hertfordshire. There, in full view, the little red city nestles to-day in the suddenly spread foliage of the thirtieth

of May. And here, having walked down the green slope, crossed the little river Ver, and passed by or through the vanished Verulam (taking a memorial flint-stone from the ruined Roman wall), I stand in a quiet lane; and am amazed to find myself here. On the opposite slope, across the narrow wooded valley, stretches the vast length of the great church of St. Albans: ancient church but new cathedral. The central tower shows plainly its strange material: the Roman bricks, so thin that one would rather call them tiles, which are serving a second use. From the older dwellings of Verulam, built by Roman hands, the materials were taken; carried across the Ver to the northern slope: and piled up, eight hundred years since, into that severe, but magnificent structure, second in length among mediæval churches that abide: Winchester, which is first, transcending, with its 555 feet and 8 inches, St. Albans by just seven feet. The flat tiles were leisurely laid: the walls all round rose but seven feet in each year of the time of building: the superabundant mortar had time to harden before it was severely compressed: and the upshot was, that in the walls of the nave it is calculated there is as much mortar as there is of tiles. But mortar, even of the faithfully-working Middle Ages, is not as stone: not even as Roman tiles, second-hand: and that wall which stretches its inordinate length away to the left of that red tower, striated with horizontal lines, was till lately two feet

off the perpendicular. But the strength and skill of the nineteenth century pulled it right; and these great buttresses will doubtless hold it right for some centuries to come. Over the great church and the red city stretches, this afternoon, the blue sky, with many fleecy clouds slowly drifting towards the north-west: for (though you would not think it) there is an easterly wind. The trees wear their first wonderful green: the leaves, delaying long, have come quickly at last; and the apple-trees are glorified with blossoms. And so here they are in actual presence: Verulam, and St. Albans, and the grand abbey church: all set in the greenest of verdure, all spread under the bluest of May skies. One has thought of Bacon, to whom popular consent has given a title which never came from the recognised source of such distinction: What is the use of talking of Lord Verulam, and informing your fellow-creatures that never on this earth there lived such a man as Lord Bacon? You would merely be set down as a pedant, over-accurate: or even as one who, knowing extremely little, desires to make parade of the little you know. One has thought, too, of Dickens and *Bleak House*: for that quiet city is the very place which poor Jo named as *Stolbuns*. Here dwelt the brick-makers, and to this scene, so different in the wild winter night and day, came Lady Dedlock on her last awful walk. Persons lacking in culture inhabit these parts still: for of three individuals whom the writer asked the

way to the Cathedral, one had never heard of any such thing, and the other two directed him wrong. It is conceivable, indeed, that the English language, as spoken by him, was not easily understood of English ears. The little hostelry, too, by the Ver, and hard by a narrow stream quite covered with water-cresses, bearing the name of *The Fighting Cocks*, preserves the memory of a form of diversion not much approved at any season by cultured souls. But with this glittering green of the earth, and the sapphire sky above, which seemed impossible of return through that black and awful winter, St. Albans and its environing fields and woods look now the ideal of peaceful beauty. I knew the church well, though it was seen but once before, and then cursorily at the rate of fifty miles an hour: but what one wants now is to drink in its aspect and feel that one is here. For I am not likely ever to be in this place again; and far different scenes will be around one to-morrow.

All things are strange, even to the names above the shop-doors. You can hardly walk along a street in an English town without seeing some name you never saw nor heard of before.

Time goes fast here. I had three hours, but they are nearly gone. Nothing shall be said of the church on this page. That may be again. Through this little gate: into this green wood: by the wall of Verulam, ruined and ivy-grown: over the bridge:

past *The Fighting Cocks*: up the green swell of grassy field to the Cathedral: by blossoming apple-tree and great yew: so to the Midland station; and back to ordinary life again.

Some may regard all this as a digression from the severity of the argument. Possibly they are right.

The little boy of eight comes back at one o'clock, and tells you, as fully as he can, all that has befallen him since you parted. It is but the beginning of a deeper separation that you have here. His brothers, who are older, go out for the long day, and you and they have already begun to go your several ways. And further on, when the children are growing into young men and young women, even though you do all you can to retain their confidence, and though you listen with unfeigned interest to all they tell you about their concerns and companions, still their life has in great measure parted company with yours, and you would do no better than weary them by trying to keep the old way. You strive vainly with the estranging power of time, and with the isolation that comes of being an individual being. You know mainly all your little boy is thinking of, unless you be a selfish brute; all that he is afraid of and anxious about. But the rift soon comes, and it will grow into a wide separation. The young nature is transparent at the first, and you see through it. But the water, shallow and transparent at its rise, deepens

fast and darkens; and you cannot see through it any more. And when the sad and perplexing day comes, that the hopeful lad must leave you for some distant place which you will never see, you know that though he is sorry to leave you, he would be still more sorry to stay with you; and you discover that the manifest intention of Providence is, that human beings should each stand on his own feet and go each his separate way. In earlier days one could not imagine how the aging parents managed to live at all, with their children scattered over the wide world. When a man, returning from India, told you it was ten years since he saw his children last, you gazed at him with wonder, and with a pity which you subsequently discovered to have been needless. The parting had been bitter at the first, but it is the rule that people shall get over things. The facts are stated, truly and beautifully, by Philip van Artevelde :

Pain and grief
Are transitory things, no less than joy :
And though they leave us not the men we were,
Yet they do leave us.

But that the trial is in contemplation rather than in fact, makes it all the sadder to look forward to. To be told, when you were a little fellow, heart-broken at going away from home for a year, that when you were grown up you would not care a bit though you never saw your brothers and sisters at all, would be no

comfort whatsoever. Just the reverse. Let us be knocked on the head at once, if *that* be what we shall come to if we live. There is a pleasant rural place, not unknown to fame, where the writer abode when he was a little boy : only green fields and trees, red rocks and a little river. If any mortal had told him, in those days, that the time would come when through years he would never see that place and never miss it, it would have been a sharp pang. Now he is in a measure content, though it has been visited just once in the last twenty-five years : half a lifetime ; nearly a whole working lifetime. And there are few things which more infuriate one, than when a hard-headed mortal with no heart whatever, but with a good deal of worldly experience, expresses his calm conviction of the unreliability of human purposes and the evanescence of human feeling. I have heard, long ago, a grim being, with high cheek-bones and a frost-bitten complexion, speaking in that fearful tone which indicates origin in Aberdeenshire and the idiosyncrasy concomitant, say of a poor crushed creature whose young wife had died, "Ah, don't let him say he won't marry a third." Except, indeed, attendance at a Scotch *Church Court*, I know nothing more irritating than the like hard sayings ; which are all the harder that they have many times proved to be quite true. Different folk, doubtless, are irritated in different ways. The mention of a name, with unpleasant remembrances attaching to it, subjects the

patience of some to a breaking strain. "For any sake," said the kindest of duchesses, addressing a man known to the present writer, "don't mention the name of Mr. Snooks before the Duke: it always makes him swear horribly!" As indeed it did. The greatest by far of recent Scotch Churchmen told me that he never could read the newspaper reports of the meetings of a certain ecclesiastical assembly, without the like phenomenon occurring in his personal experience: only that his cursory remarks were said inaudibly, and so gave no offence. But when the pressure rises to a certain height, it appears needful that the steam be blown off. And a verbal vent is the one which first suggests itself to many. My friend Smith tells me that there are certain touching bits of verse which he thinks over, when embittered by ecclesiastical vulgarity and dishonesty (not to name stupidity), which never fail to recall him to his better self. He lately showed me certain verses, which have proved efficacious many times. They bear the title *Sin' his mother gaed awa'*: their writer is unknown, but surely one of the nameless immortals. And they tell, beautifully, how the awful blow of a great bereavement did but change the strong man, but was killing the little boy. Not every one, however, would be helped by means so simple. But of their number, thus soothed and helped, let my readers ever be.

My friend Smith told me that on a beautiful

autumn day he was in a great and confusing railway station at the entrance of the Highlands, which at that season is for certain hours of the day a place of unspeakable hubbub and crowding. For whether you are making for Inverness-shire heather or for Aberdeenshire birches, it is very nearly inevitable that you pass through that lengthy and gusty shed. Stolid are the servants, and too few: the piles of luggage and the boxes of grouse are dreadful. Though you must needs wait there for many minutes, the wise man will not come forth from his carriage if it be in any way possible to abide in it. There, seated alone in a carriage which had come from beside the bleak North Sea and was making for awful London, Smith found an old gentleman he knew. One sees the quiet, sharp, cynical face: the world knew well how very keen and trenchant the nearest to him in blood could be. Smith talked with him till the train went: the thing which most impressed him was how entirely alone that old man had come to be. His wife was dead: and his great household of boys and girls were scattered far and wide: all grown up, each in his own home or hers. He could not have told you the names of his grandchildren: he had no idea earthly what sons or daughters were thinking of or doing on that day. One was an eminent author; but the old man never read his books. The old man was cynically cheerful: he had quite parted company with the faces and the

interests of former years : he did not really care a bit for anybody but himself. He had run about on the grass on summer mornings with the merry little boys and girls, forty years ago : but that was all gone by. The stern-faced moustached sons, and the clever worldly middle-aged women, who were in fact his children, were not the little boys and girls at all. He had no children : they had ceased to be such, unless in form of law. The rift that began when the lad of eight years came to say good-bye, going to school, had grown into a severance broader than the broad Atlantic. You will be startled, some day, my reader, to find yourself coming to be as the old gentleman was : to find yourself going about quite cheerfully, though your boys are far away, though you have seen your wife die. You would not have believed it once.

But there is more to say. Let me address myself to men and women whose years are approaching fifty, and who married early in their career. Such know a touching but inevitable form of parting company. Let me ask such, Where are the children ? Where are the little fairies that ran about your home, these short years ago ? I do not mean that they are dead : not even that they are scattered : only that they are changed. You always knew, even from the first, that the charm of childhood must needs go : you often thought to yourself, looking at the little faces and listening to the merry voices, that you wished nobody

would ever grow older. For something would be lost, which not even the growing intelligence of early manhood and womanhood would quite repay. They are all you could wish, your boys and girls: and you are thankful: I will not suppose the occasional black sheep, nor the cantankerous unmanageable fool; for unless there were somewhat of that same in yourself, it will not be. But I say, Where are the children: the solemn eyes that scanned your face so earnestly when some question was put, touching the nature of our being here, whose answer only God knows: the little dog that came in, barking as no ordinary dog ever did, when you were very busy, but whom you could not possibly send away: the young looker-on into the Future who sat upon your knee, and eagerly told you many things which were pictured as sure to happen, which you know now were in fact never to be? These are gone, utterly and for ever. If they had died, they would have abode in memory the same little beings for ever: years would not have changed them: and you would have cherished the firm belief that when you found them again, where we hope to find every one, you would find them the very same, little children waiting to welcome you as of old. There is no death so complete, as the death which comes through continuing life: there is nothing you lose so utterly as what you keep: here. The little one that gradually died into the grown-up man or woman, is dead irrevocably and for evermore.

If I had ever attached any importance whatever to the argument (so-called) for a Future Life, which founds on the transparent delusion that anything you miss very much you are sure to get back again, and that anything you don't see how you are to do without will in fact be given to you, I confess I should be frightened sorely by this which has just been said. For it has never been suggested that in a better world you will find your friend more in number than one individual being : not even that you will be allowed to fix on the stage in your friend's development at which you would like to arrest him and keep him evermore the same. No one supposes that even there you can have your children as both old and young : the often-remembered looks and sayings of their earliest youth are gone away eternally. There are many such that sometimes bring the tears to your eyes : but unless there came the revolution of the great Platonic year, you are always leaving them further behind you. And you must just learn to do without them. If these dear things are never to come back, wherefore any ? It is quite manifest that the fact that we should be unutterably glad to have again some prized thing departed, is no warrant earthly that it is to return.

It touches one to see even very homely manifestations of the fashion in which men manage to live, who have parted company with most people and most things they valued. In these hard and dry days,

much is made of sober satisfactions. "I like to see anything right ; it lightens the mind, Doctor." Such were the very words once said to my friend Smith. There was the sad worn old face : the speaker's wife was long dead, and his children mostly scattered : the frailties of age were gathering fast : in fact, he was pretty well broken-hearted. To see little things about his house and his garden right was the only enjoyment that remained. And that was hardly enjoyment : it did but lift the burden a little. "It lightens the mind." And the statement was made in a quiet sorrowful voice. This is certainly better than the kind of satisfaction which I once heard sketched in a coarse speech by a coarse soul. "Their only enjoyment," said the blatant vulgarian, "is getting drunk, and going to the Devil in other ways." "Going to the Devil" is a euphemism : the phrase actually used was coarser. But to partake of this range of gratification, even to a large measure, that sorry being declared was not so bad as to sign certain testing articles in a different sense from that in which the sorry being did himself understand them. It was a sober satisfaction to the writer that no mortal with a soul above contempt minded in the least what that being said.

There are few things more touching to one with some little discernment, than the fashion in which many human beings try to smile at grave facts. "Were not my heart light, I wad die," wrote Lady Grizel Baillie ; and said the broken-spirited Robert

Burns : there is no heavier heart than the one which affects that unreal lightness. It is as when poor Anne Boleyn the evening before her execution jested about her little neck. Even so, one has seen those who tried to talk cheerfully, not to say comically, about the great wrench of parting. One of the most successful attempts to put such a thing amusingly may be found in one of the earlier stories of Mr. Anthony Trollope. He relates how a kind-hearted but philosophic Frenchman, aware of the necessity of submission to the inevitable, and desirous to express his sorrow and his submission at once to certain friends whose departure was imminent, devised the following line of idiomatic English to convey his mingled feelings :—

Are you go ? Is you gone ? And I left ? Verra vell !

You may try, kindly reader, the next time the necessity occurs, whether that kind of thing will much help you. When the railway train is sweeping you away in one direction, and the great steamship bearing your brother in the other, who parted two hours since and may not meet any more in this world, you may lean back and close your eyes and think of the poor Frenchman's pathetic line, and aim at his judicious resignation. *Verra vell!* I fear you will find the thing will not do. Like many other helps here provided, it may look like something real in days when it is not wanted, but it will collapse into utter

emptiness when it is needed. A document which is possibly the earliest written that survives makes mention of *miserable comforters*. And the latest experience of human hearts is not unlikely to resemble the first recorded.

A homely expression of solemn facts does not make them less solemn : rather more. When it comes home to one's self, we cannot bear anything high-flown. The simplest words are the only ones that seem real. An anxious wife said to her husband, who had been ill for a very few days, and who (speaking as one with special knowledge) had conveyed that the danger was greater than she thought, "But you don't mean that you may have to leave me?" There was a moment's pause : and the answer came, "It's on the cards." It was more. It was to be, and that very soon. You cannot allow yourself to say out what you are thinking and feeling. A little since, I saw two lads, each of twenty-one, who had been more than brothers since each was five years old, part for at least many years. "Good-bye, old fellow," were the last words. They could not begin to talk sentimentally in the bustle of the railway station, when the finest train which runs in this world was about to go. And I knew well that they had not done it at all. It was when Mr. Crummles was parting from Nicholas Nickleby, caring very little about it, that he strained the recalcitrant Nicholas to his heart, on the street, as the coach was starting, and exclaimed, "Farewell, my noble, my

lion-hearted boy!" But when, afterwards, the parting came which was indeed a trial, things were changed. "Not a jot of his theatrical manner remained: he put out his hand with an air which, if he could have summoned it at will, would have made him the best actor of his day in homely parts." We remember, vividly, the time and place of parting: but we make no use of the word "Farewell," and we speak of these things to no one. Happily, we do not take in that the one who goes is to be so long away: that a year will go over, and another year: and the bright face will never be seen, the familiar step never heard, the pleasant presence gone out of our daily life, and from the dwelling and the ways we know. Yet you will understand something of the meaning of the lines which say, "'Twas strange that such a little thing Should leave a blank so large," or, as the man said in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* when Eva died, "The world is as empty as an egg-shell."

The separation is wide which is made by culture. One sees it, when the toiling father and mother have pinched themselves for years to send their boy to a Scotch University, thinking to make him a gentleman: but not realising the estrangement which is sure to follow the success of their toils and schemes. There need be no severance in affection: but the highly-educated lad with his degree in honours has found access into a world of thought which to the

cottager and his thrifty wife is not at all. Just yesterday, I received a letter from an unknown friend in British Columbia, telling how, some fifty years ago, he and a little brother were sent from Perth to Glasgow by the coach. The sixty miles take two hours now, but then it was a long journey. The guard of the stage-coach was a swart, broad-faced, ruddy man : he was kind to the two boys, and told them that he had a laddie of his ain, who was a gude scholar. The guard's language was a very moderate expression of the fact. For his son was James Halley, who was out of sight the best scholar of his time in the University of Glasgow : a pale, freckled, gentle lad, whose mother eked out the good guard's income by keeping a little shop in the High Street, hard by the College where her son was *facile princeps* : the second to him, but with a considerable space between, was a lad then known as Archy Tait, now well known by a different designation. One sees the decent trustworthy guard going out for his long day's journey, in all kinds of weather : helping luggage up and down : saying a cheering word to lonely boy travellers : sitting with the honest sensible Scotch face screwed up in the north wind : and the pale student lad going into his classes, and toiling in his little room at home : the most lovable of sons as well as the most brilliant of scholars : writing Greek Iambics as one man in a generation does : living in a world of thought unknown on the Perth coach or in

the little shop in the High Street. One pictures the guard coming home in the winter evening and asking how Jamie (so they called him) had got through the day: and Jamie telling him how grandly Sir Daniel had read a bit of Æschylus that afternoon: likewise that there had been *no misfortunes*. In such words was a little boy known to the writer wont to relate that no punishment had befallen him at school. And some analogous expression would convey to the proud old Halley that Jamie's Greek verses for that day had not been surpassed or equalled by those of the laborious Archy Tait. Still, here parents and child were not so far asunder. It was not as when the old working man John McLiver went on earning his eighteenpence a day when his son was F.M. Lord Clyde. The Field Marshal bought his father a cottage, and sent him an occasional bank-note through the parish minister: but he did not come to see him. It was nobody's fault: but it was sad all the same.

Thus we part company. .



CHAPTER XIV.

LITTLE TO SHOW.



A **GAIN** among Perthshire hills and lakes, Perthshire woods and rocks, the broom and the heather. And this after not thinking ever to see them more. It was partly a mistake when somebody said that to enjoy what is present you must have a long prospect ahead. To some people, in some moods, that is so. But you will find out that when you are coming slowly out of a severe illness, which brought you face to face with the great Change: when you take each day and are thankful for it, not thinking of another: when you know that present ease may be a brief reprieve before the iron grasp of pain again takes hold of you: you enjoy things as keenly as ever. I venture to differ from Mr. Ruskin. There is no human being who has not many times differed from Mr. Ruskin. No one can admire him more, or in many things more heartily accept his

teaching. But it was a morbid and transient mood, it was the shadow of his great illness coming upon him, when he said, that at fifty-three he could no longer look with pleasure at the setting sun.

Now in this audible stillness of the beautiful summer evening, let us walk two miles towards the sunset, golden and red, glorious beyond remembering when it is gone. We have come up a wooded valley: and here you may sit down on a little bridge, where a quiet stream steals out from a beautiful loch. The steep and shaggy banks make its edges black, but the broad central sheet of water still brightly reflects the sky. Do not call the word *loch*, ignorant Saxon: you can easily say *loch* if you try. Still less, you affected whipper-snapper of a denationalised Scot, venture to forswear your birthright and talk of a *loch* to me. As sure as you do, I shall inflict appropriate and condign punishment. I will investigate how near you are in blood to the Eldership of the Scotch Kirk; and make the fact known to your Anglican acquaintances, to your deep mortification. For the fact would not mortify you, unless you were a very poor creature.

The summer has been cold and rainy: the season is late. All the pleasanter, pleasant beyond words, have come this glittering sunshine, this sapphire sky, these golden and crimson clouds, covering all the West. And beautiful things are still present with us, which in other years would have been past and gone.

Though this be one of the first four days of August, the touch of Autumn might be here : it was here this day twelvemonths. But this evening, these quiet miles, a blaze of briar roses, red and white, has lighted up the hedges on either hand : and all the way the air has been sweet with the fragrance of the breathing clover. The broom, in patches, still keeps its yellow flowers. Though now it is near nine o'clock, the twilight is like daylight to one coming out from that dark avenue of thick trees ; and the great moon, sailing above, yellow as is the summer moon, adds no appreciable light because none is needed. Here is the first holiday : and it comes as welcome as in departed years.

Times come, leisure times in a busy life, times when unwonted illness enforces cessation of accustomed work, in which you look back over the way you have come ; you turn over your diary (commonly a saddening and humbling experience) : you think of much labour, of the full exertion of what little might you had : and ask yourself, What is to Show ? What is the outcome of it all ? What abiding result is there of all you have done, beyond the mere bearing of the burden of the day that was passing over you ? Is there any ? Yes, there is some. But it is very little.

Of course you remember that there are morbid views, which in a little will go. There are transient moods, not to be mistaken for the abiding mind.

As in all matters of opinion the last appeal must lie to the average good sense of average mankind, so to discover your own resultant and permanent judgment you must eliminate exceptional and hasty judgments, formed under temporary pressure. Unless you be a fool, perennial and incurable, you are well aware that very often, for short spaces, you have thought and judged like an inexpressible fool. Sometimes, too, it may be that for periods which passed with lightning swiftness, you have been an immense deal wiser and farther-seeing than your average.

In these transient seasons when you form exceptional judgments, by and by to go, you have known what it is to conclude that all your life has been a wretched failure, and all you have done beneath contempt. As for what you have written (if anything), you really think it is even worse than an amiable brother in the like vocation with yourself declared it to be in the Whistlebinkie halfpenny paper. The word *criticism* is not well applied to the poor outburst of spite from the man who has never forgiven your beating him at College : but it may be said that a writer of moderate sense is often surprised that the unfriendly critic fails to put his finger upon the weakest and worst points in the production of the human being whom (God knows why) he hates. Now, seeing how much better and more successfully you will do your work when you have confidence in yourself : not to mention how much happier you will

be in doing it ; you may occasionally have thought that he was a wise man, that Weaver of Kilwinning, proverbially known over the West of Scotland, concerning whom only this fact is recorded, that he earnestly entreated his Maker for a good opinion of himself. *A good conceit of himself*, was the expressive phrase of Ayrshire in the writer's boyhood.

One has often thought that there is something specially cheering about work which leaves something to show. At College you pored a long evening over a knotty bit of Æschylus ; at last you thought you had mastered it ; but the acquisition was invisible and intangible. But when you had composed a few Greek Iambics, or written a page or two of an essay, here was something done concerning which there could be no question. What your work might be worth was a different matter ; but if it were your very best, the pleasantest smile in all this world (if Wordsworth be right) beamed quietly upon you ; and here was something tangible accomplished. The Chorus of Æschylus, in after years, would be quite forgot. Yes, and when you looked then at your old prize essay, it would be as strange to its author as to any one else. But at least the fading pages are there, for what they are worth. And if intellectual labour (let us say headwork) often leave no apparent memorial or result, yet more imponderable is the result of moral struggle. You fight with a bad habit : you daff aside a temptation : you try to grow better

tempered, or at least to suppress the unworthy speech or act in which ill-temper would reveal itself: but not merely is there nothing to show; you are very far from being sure that you have indeed attained even an invisible possession. As for the human beings (by many esteemed as holding an enviable place in life) who have nothing to do but to amuse themselves, their daily proceedings leave no trace at all. If, like Chatterton's hero, they "sum the actions of the day at night before they sleep," one would think they must feel very uncomfortable. But the enjoyment of the sense that something has been attempted and done in the day that has gone over is probably an acquired taste. And Southey's daily exercise with his pen came to be very much like some old gentleman's daily strokes at Golf. Only Southey's pen left its abiding traces, which oftentimes were indeed worth extremely little; while the old golfer's strokes are without apparent result. You may say, of course, that they brought him health and cheerfulness. But health and cheerfulness are not what I mean when I speak of something to show. I mean a visible and abiding result of past work, which you can see and handle: the book written, the house built, the picture painted, the waving harvest-field, the money saved and invested. Sir Gilbert Scott, looking at the churches he had built and restored (and let grumblers say what they please, he was a very great Architect): Robert Stephenson, looking at the London and

Birmingham Railway, and the Menai Bridge : Mr. Gladstone, regarding the enactments he has added to the Statute book ; and Mr. Disraeli, thinking of a great Party which he had educated with a vengeance ; have known the special sensation implied in having a vast deal to show : For better or worse, such men have left their mark on their age. But with ordinary folk, living an ordinary life, even a busy one, pretty nearly all energy goes to bear the burden of the day that is passing over and to do the work it brings : and hardly any abiding result survives and endures.

When human beings are subjected to the process which used to be called being *brought to book*, the result is for the most part very humbling. For being brought to book means that, instead of one's being allowed to estimate himself and his work by vague impressions, you are brought to the accurate and searching test of arithmetical verity. Isaac Disraeli gives in one of his works a careful calculation of the number of volumes which it is possible for a man to actually read in a lifetime : the number is startlingly small. If you count the number actually present at a large meeting of men and women, it will prove to be just about half what it would have been reckoned to be, even by those not unaccustomed to see large meetings. If the gathering be one of thousands, it will count up to about one-sixth or one-eighth of what an unexperienced person would call it. Many folk have an impression that in the winter sky they

have seen at once many thousands of stars: some would say many millions. Not reckoning nebular gleams, the number of stars the human eyes can see is not two thousand. And when very laborious mortals are brought to book as to the time which can be habitually given to work in the twenty-four hours, the result is surprising and it is taking down. Large spaces must needs be given to sleep, and food, and raiment. A lengthened portion of each year goes to the dismal process of shaving. The morning tub, in a year, engages an appreciable amount of your conscious life. From the moment at which you rise in the morning till the moment when you take steadfastly to work, having had breakfast and glanced over the newspaper, and (if in the country) having had a little turn in the open air, have not two hours gone? I am not going into details. But, as a fact, the time in each day for which the machinery of mind and body can be driven at full pressure, is surprisingly brief: and of that time no small measure goes to the doing of work which must needs be done, but which leaves no trace. It would leave traces, and painful ones, were it neglected. The answering your letters, answer them as briefly as you may, exhausts time and energy daily. You mow down the worrying crop: but next morning there it is again. I speak of ordinary professional folk, with their moderate correspondence. Bishops, and the like, with thirty letters to write each day, every one

requiring thought, and several demanding anxious consideration, can have little energy left for any writing else. It is no wonder that they preach extempore, or give old sermons or sermons written off at a sitting.

And yet, an immense deal of work can be done in not so many years by one whose vitality is not frittered away by the unceasing and worrying calls of professional and domestic life. Mr. Buckle died at forty, having acquired an amount of knowledge which seemed marvellous. Yet when near twenty, he could not read nor write. Twenty years sufficed to accumulate the stores of which we have startling glimpses in the *History of Civilisation*. But Mr. Buckle was rich. And Mr. Buckle was unmarried.

If you, being a brain-driving man, and getting on through the years of middle age, should be struck down by serious illness, which gives you a very near view of the solemn End, it will probably be in your experience as you are gradually getting better that you will frequently think how many men who did good work in this world died no older than yourself. Several times in each day it will be impressed upon you how many these men are: and the upshot will be that you will be brought to even a humbler view of the little you have yourself done in your life than you commonly suffer under. I do not think, saying this, of the great geniuses in Poetry, in Painting, in Music, who go at thirty-seven; Mozart and Mendels-

sohn, Raphael, Byron, Burns : nor of the wild crew of the earlier English dramatists, whose insane career told in such fashion on body and soul that it must needs be brief. It is very startling to think that Shakespeare learnt all he knew, and said it as he has done, and died at fifty-one. Thackeray died at fifty-two ; Spenser at forty-nine ; Arnold died at forty-eight. There was a man, of whom no reader of this page ever heard, who was a really great ecclesiastic in a small sphere ; wielding for many years an influence which in such a sphere is not gained unless through lengthened time. His name was Andrew Thomson : and he died at fifty-two. There never was a greater advocate at the English Bar than Follett. He died at forty-six. Dickens had done the work on which his fame rests at a very early age ; but, with his nervous system, the wonder is he surpassed thirty-seven. With that hysterical sensibility, it is marvellous that he reached fifty-seven. We must beware, however, of classifying ourselves with the immortals, even as concerns their years. For by simply classifying ourselves with such, we may subject ourselves to several mortifications. There was a decent man in recent days, who had published certain volumes of inexpressibly unreadable verse. On a certain occasion he was conversing with a friend, and (as was his wont) he led the talk to that which was with him the greatest of all subjects : to wit, Himself. With a sigh, he said that it behoved

him to be diligent in making the most of the time which remained to him, forasmuch as his time was short. His friend asked, with awakened curiosity, what it was he meant. "Ah," he replied mournfully, "you know all great geniuses die at thirty-seven." The friend, eager to comfort him, entreated him to discard the notion that he was to be prematurely cut off; assuring him that he did not run the smallest risk of dying at the age peculiar to great geniuses. But the friend informed me that instead of being cheered by the communication and grateful to him who conveyed it, the poet glowed with indignation. Another poet, who was in several respects the exact incarnation of a snob (in Mr. Thackeray's sense of the word), has assured us that he would rather be subjected to the very worst possible extremity in the company of a duke, than be admitted to what was far too good for him in what he termed *vulgar company*. Even so would that unreadable though estimable author much rather have been removed in the flower of his days, than have been spared to the good old age which he in fact attained, if he might die at the years of Mendelssohn, Raphael, and Byron. I do not mention Toplady, though he was similarly distinguished: save to say that if some good folk who ignorantly admire him, knew some facts as to what they would no doubt call his ritualistic ways, they would hasten to discern extreme High Churchism in *Rock of Ages*.

I see Follett yet, getting wearily out of his carriage at the door of the Guildhall Courts in the morning, to begin his day's work. It was a high, old-fashioned chariot; and he generally left his *Times*, opened up in untidy fashion, lying on its floor. I see the worn, pale face, not without a look of suffering; the short iron-grey hair; as the great advocate slowly and stiffly walked up the steps, eagerly eyed by divers young Templars who vainly thought they were some day to rival him. In a few minutes, arrayed now in his wig and gown, he would be opening a case in the Queen's Bench, with mellifluous flow of speech hardly ever rivalled, and with little peculiarities of expression long forgotten. He was fond of the unclassical word *colluding*: and though men in general speak of pounds, shillings, and pence, and Americans of dollars and cents, Follett always spoke of *a thousand pound*. Does any great American lawyer say that a man is worth (i.e. *has*, probably he *is worth* nothing) *a million dollar*? The old days come back, wherein the writer paced the classic shades of the Temple, and honestly studied the Law: days for which there is nothing earthly now to show, and wherein his life was millions of miles away from that of these latter years. Not one in a thousand of the human beings among whom he lives knows what the Temple means, or has the faintest idea of what is meant by a Master in Chancery. And probably the writer alone among all living Scotch theologians has read and abstracted

Blackstone's Commentaries and Chitty's Practice. It is too plain that most of his brethren are all abroad as to the functions of a Special Pleader; and that some of them fancy that to *join issue* means exactly the opposite of what it does. A minute before Follett drove up, a great rosy-faced man of above six feet, mounted on a huge high-trotting horse, had rode at a lumbering but rapid pace right round the little space which the Guildhall fronts, stopped at the side door leading to the Courts, clumsily thrown himself off, and bustled up the steps with a large pair of white macintosh leggings and a stern expression of countenance. He was a great man then, and one looked at him with all respect; but save a very ill-written memoir in one volume, there is nothing to show for him now: his place has been twice emptied and twice filled since then: but many of the writer's standing must remember him well, and his deep voice, and his graceful dignity on the Bench, and his unfailing courtesy. He was the Chief Justice of England, Lord Denman; and his earlier career had been a strange one. The days were in which betting men would have laid any odds that he never would hold that office; or any other from which unscrupulous malignity, mindful of the deserved lash laid upon it, could keep him back: unscrupulous malignity in what by courtesy must be called high places. Lower places, if there be such things as right and wrong, could not be. Doubtless Lord Denman's old office

is now far more brilliantly filled : neither as Advocate nor as Judge could you call it other than a far cry from Denman to Cockburn : but the present Chief Justice * does not look the thing at all like his majestic predecessor. *Par negotiis neque supra* was all one could say, in that old time, in the Queen's Bench. The patient, kindly, fully equipped Tindal, C.J., presided in the Common Pleas : and the incomparable Advocate in all trials by Jury, in such surpassing Follett, surpassing Wilde, surpassing all men, Scarlett, whom ill-luck and envy had held back for many years, was Chief Baron of the Exchequer, and not a very great Judge. I see him, sitting in his shabby and uncomfortable Court, with rubicund visage and a black patch over one eye, taking notes diligently with a dirty old steel pen with a broken handle. It was second-class business that went to the Exchequer in those days : and second-class Counsel pleaded there. Wilde was supreme in the Common Pleas : Next, but a long way off, was Talfourd. Farther down, Bompas and Channell. A few Serjeants sat there wearily, with nothing earthly to do. I remember their names well, but I shall not record them : I see their faces, very sorrowful faces : as a boy, I pitied them heartily. Ah, years after I was told by a relation of the most briefless of all (the relation did not know that I knew the C.P. as now I know my parish church), how he was just going to be made a Judge

* Written in 1879.

when in fact he suddenly was not. He was just as near being made a Judge as I this day am to being made Pope : or, as some good folk put it, *Popp of Romm*. Let no relative of a briefless barrister ever make any statement concerning him to a member of the Honourable Society of the Outer Temple unless the statement be true. For the Templar will know the facts, exactly : though politeness (not to say pity) may hinder his stating them. In the Queen's Bench was the Attorney-General, the emaciated old Scotchman Sir Frederick Pollock : Senior Wrangler in his day : a good lawyer and a courteous gentleman. Then Follett, Solicitor-General ; of whom no more need be said. Hardly behind Follett in practice, the closely-shaven, thin-faced, tall and graceful Thesiger : for many a year as popular an advocate as the English Bar has known : an eminently successful getter of verdicts. Yet once, in cynical humour, disgusted by some specially idiotic Jury, he said in the writer's hearing that after a case had been tried, and the Judge had summed up, and the Jury retired, he would be quite content, instead of waiting for the verdict, that a half-crown should be tossed up, and heads or tails decide the matter. It was he who, coming out of the House of Commons, was addressed by a matter-of-fact Member, pointing to Canning's statue, with the sagacious remark, "Canning was not so tall a man as that." Thesiger, with cordial assent, replied, "No, nor so green." I wonder whether his sons, who

have got on in life much earlier than their far cleverer father, ever saw him in his robes : at least till he became Lord Chancellor. One of Follett's nearest relations told me that he never had seen Follett in his wig. And though he saw Follett perpetually, the single remark of Follett's that he could remember was that lawyers do not generally succeed in the House of Commons because they speak too well. But if Follett's kindred failed to appreciate him duly, there were those who did. Lord Ellenborough, Chief Justice of England, when asked in age what were the greatest pleasures in life, replied that the greatest he knew were a quiet game at whist, and to hear a young lawyer named Follett argue a point of law. And Helps told the writer, more than once, that it was one of his greatest enjoyments to hear Follett speak, no matter on what subject. But he died, being Attorney-General, at the age already named. Humbled to the earth, and below it, ought certain Attorney-Generals whom the writer has known to be when they think whose place they hold, but assuredly do not fill. What Curran meant by the words I do not in any way know, save that he meant something depreciatory, when he declared that a certain speech was more like an Attorney-Particular than an Attorney-General. But, taking the phrase to mean something very bad, any one who has known the law for the last thirty years, has known several most awful Attorney-Particulars. Happily for them they were so awfully

Particular, that they seemed quite pleased with themselves. But the greatest Attorney-General died before being made Lord Chancellor. All his career is a fading memory in a number of men which is year by year lessening. And save a statue of white marble in the North aisle of the Nave of Westminster Abbey, there is nothing to show of Follett. No memoir of him was ever written: in any case none was ever published. Yet those who often saw and heard him will never forget him. My last remembrance of him is sitting on the bench which used to run along the side of Lincoln's Inn Hall, with his hands thrust very deeply into his pockets, with the black eyes gleaming out from under the white wig, listening with deep attention to a solicitor who was coaching him up for a Chancery case. For he went into the Court of Chancery sometimes, though mainly a common lawyer. In a minute more he was addressing Lord Lyndhurst, then Chancellor, having mastered his brief without reading it by the solicitor's help. And the keen pale face of the Chancellor was earnestly watching the man in whom he knew he had met his match, and fancied he beheld his successor. It was a grievous thought, that Follett had sometimes to plead before decent old Lord Cottenham. That a man should be, in Lord Melbourne's words, "the best of cooks" (the phrase is to be understood morally), may make him a pleasant colleague for an easy-going Premier thankful to be rid of Brougham: but is a

poor reason for putting him where (if he were strong enough) he would be the head of the English Law. But, as a curious fact, the Whigs have had to put up with very weak Chancellors, till they came to Bethell and Roundell Palmer. And both of these had been Tories. The names of Cottenham, Cranworth, and Hatherley, look very small and pale in the grand succession. Lord Campbell was one of the best of Chief Justices, but he became Chancellor at eighty. He was master of his work ; but it was too late. And you could not rank him, as an equity lawyer, beside Lyndhurst and Cairns.

The successful Advocate has his Peerage to show : his fortune (which may be a large one, unless he has an extravagant and silly wife) : his social place, much uplifted in most cases from the level at which he began : his family of sons and daughters, expensively educated, started in life with the idea that they are to do nothing, and sometimes idiots to that inexpressible degree that they are ashamed of the only thing they have to be proud of, that their father was a great lawyer. Even the kindly Sir Walter Scott was irritated for once when his eldest son, sent into a cavalry regiment to lead a life of amusement, wrote his father a letter in which he talked in contemptuous terms of *Edinburgh lawyers*. Let us hope that this was merely a transient phase of snobbish folly in Sir Walter the second. It brought back a well-deserved reminder that he was himself the son of one

Edinburgh lawyer and the grandson of another, and owed everything he had and was to the fact that he was such : likewise a suggestion that, considering the premises, it was rather too much for him to talk with such airs. Besides these material traces of the successful lawyer's career, you have now and then his printed volumes. Of course Bacon is beyond speaking of. You have Brougham's unreadable pages, very many : you have Campbell's volumes of pleasant gossiping history ; you have Jeffrey's Essays, specimens for the most part of a school of criticism which has passed away. But Lyndhurst, Follett, Thesiger, Wilde, Scarlett, Bethell, are wholly silent. They said very much, but they wrote nothing at all. There is nothing to show. As for Lord Erskine, all that remains beyond the tradition of a marvellous eloquence is the speech written for him by Mr. Hookham Frere. In that striking oration he states that he was of noble, perhaps of royal blood : he had a house at Hampstead : he had been called many times during the past season to the country on special retainers, travelling generally in a post-chaise and four : and he was compassed with the infirmities of human nature. These assurances he repeated three times over, finally (we are informed) in a strain of *agonising eloquence*. Still, remarkable though the speech be, one would say that there must have been something about Erskine's oratory beyond what is here represented. Either that ; or it must have been

easier in his days to be a great orator than in these days of Gladstone and Bright.

All this is quite true: but just look at this beech hedge which bounds the lane along which our devious steps are slowly bearing us. They say the hedge is a hundred feet high. It looks it all. And it is the external limit of a fair domain whose name the Saxon tourist in these parts would not readily pronounce if he saw it written, and would vainly think to spell it if he heard it said. Through the great hedge blazes at this moment a sunset which makes half the horizon glorious beyond all remembrance of sunsets past. This milestone bears the legend *Perth II*. We are these miles North of the dirty town which is sometimes called the *Fair City*: and hard by is the beautiful Tay. Surely if Sir Walter has made the Tweed the river of Scotland for associations, the Tay abides the chief Scottish river for varied beauty. Deep purple against the Eastern sky stretches that range of hills. There is the round scalp of Dunsinane. And here is the roar of an express train tearing unseen over an iron bridge hidden among trees hard by. If Macbeth, from his height, had heard that sound, he would probably have concluded it was somebody coming for him. One has known folk whose antecedents would not bear examination frightened by as irrelevant a cause.

Let these discursive thoughts be concluded by the suggestion that a very uncomfortable view of the abiding resultant of a man's career in this life is gained when one thinks of the effect he may have left upon the character and career of some other people. A boyish recollection may here be permitted. In the writer's early youth a certain preacher, a Broad-Churchman coming before his day (or perhaps a High-Churchman), set forth in a rural parish certain advanced views which roused the disapproval of a local poet. The poet produced a composition in severe condemnation of the preacher's discourses, only four lines of which remain vividly in one's memory: startling in the sharpness and directness of the statement they contain, and indicating a simplicity of belief rarely met in these sophisticated days. Some apology is due for quoting them: but here they are. They speak concerning the preacher's parishioners, and suggest the character of the instruction provided for them:

The vile unsoundness of his public speech,
(Bourignian and Socinian) none can tell:
Yet still they go to church and hear him preach,
Not thinking that through him they'll go to Hell.

Something very grievous and abiding, doubtless (if true), as the result of quiet years in a quiet country parish. Let it be trusted that the declaration was as

inaccurate as it was presumptuous. And let it be hoped that the inconspicuous upshot of the life of each reader of this page may be to make any who may remember such at all, somewhat truer, kinder, and more sympathetic.



CHAPTER XV.

OF THE OPPOSITION.

In a remote region of the earth, where still a form of the English language is spoken, there exists an Institution, known to the writer though unknown to his readers, part of the necessary equipment of which is a Force of some hundreds of men, moderately paid to perform certain duties. In the main, these are very worthy folk. A few among them are outstandingly and remarkably good and able. A small number are very incompetent, idle, and rude. It falls to the writer to come into acquaintance with many of these men. He rarely finds any difficulty in liking them very much. They are a genial lot. Those of them under forty years of age are with hardly an exception highly intelligent, well-read, and liberal-minded. They will bear favourable comparison with any like class of men in this world. And in the present stage of this world's development, a class

of such men is deemed needful to the organisation of any civilised country.

Though the position of these men be but of moderate worldly elevation, their sons, starting from that point, often go to very considerable heights: some among them go extremely high. The first thing they generally do, when thus elevated, is to cut the Institution which their fathers served, and whose bread they ate in their earlier years. Rather, one would say, should they stay and try to make the Institution better, which doubtless in some respects is very necessary. These sons become ignorant, in many cases, of the very nature and peculiarities of the Institution in question. They magnanimously kick away the ladder by whose help they rose. After the manner of the little snob in Dickens, they sometimes profess entire ignorance of what they know uncommonly well. It was an individual soul that knew Mr. Pip perfectly, and had known him long, who addressed to him the words, "Don't know yah, don't know yah, 'pon my soul don't know yah!"

Even so is it with some of the elevated sons of this singular Institution. I suppose they are ashamed of it. What kind of beings they are who are ashamed of their own fathers and mothers (these having been good Christian folk) may be readily understood. I remember well how a certain man, many years ago, said to me, in a condescending manner, "Now do tell me something about this curious Institution that you

have got in this country: pray do." Thus called upon, I launched forth at much length, and (I may confess) sought to represent it rather as it ought to be than as in fact it is. My auditor listened with all apparent credulity. But just next day I found that the man in question knew all about the Institution rather better than I did: having been born and having grown up in it, and held office in it. He thought it a fine thing to appear to know nothing about it. I am of a placable and unvengeful nature, save on public questions. On these I may claim to be a tolerably good hater. I venture to say that man had reason to regret the imposition he practised on me. All I did was to tell everybody who knew him exactly what he had pretended to me.

For a long time, the good men who form the working staff of this Institution were put into their offices by the will of certain Individuals. These Individuals, having stolen a good many other things, had likewise stolen (in many cases) this power to make such appointments. I do not mean that any living persons were the Thieves: the stealing was actually done by their predecessors and ancestors about three centuries back. The technical name of the system of appointment by individual will, was Patronage. And to say the truth, the system worked uncommonly ill. It worked just so intolerably ill that an intelligent Nation arose and said the system must cease. The Nation had to say that very often, very loudly, and very long:

terrible strifes and miseries arose through the Patrons cleaving to their property : but in the end the system ceased. It did not cease nicely. It ceased because a certain political change had come, which made it ruinous to maintain it longer. And some human beings who had done their little best to maintain the system in its most high-handed form, were the first to cry out against it when they knew they durst not keep it up longer. Of course, the system was just as good when they cried it down, as it had been when they cried it up. But such was the nature of these human beings.

Patronage, broadly speaking, meant that a man should be stuck into a place, not because he deserved it, not because he was fit for it : but because he had influential friends. In that country, a patron would (in some instances) laugh in your face if you were weak enough to fancy that any consideration of the man's fitness weighed with him at all. He wanted to provide food and raiment (at the expense of other people) for some one in whom he was interested. And they were curious folk, sometimes, in whom he was interested. For while Patronage frequently failed to put in efficient men (never having intended to do so), it failed, in that country, to do what it generally did in another country near : to put in men of such standing and culture as might maintain the worldly dignity of the Institution. In that other country the Patron put in his relations : his son, brother, nephew,

cousin : and these, however lacking, did generally not lack divers personal qualifications much esteemed in an old and aristocratic country. But in the country first named, the Patron having no relations of his own in the running, no relatives of his own who wanted the places, did in divers cases put in the relatives of his servants. The son of his farm-bailiff (they call it Grieve) : the brother of his factor or estate-supervisor : ay, and a good deal lower down than that : he thus provided for. The Patron was oftentimes far too big a man to take any personal concern in the filling up of a vacancy ; and in that case he had some agent or underling who in fact exercised the patronage. Some of these were capable men, and acted to the best of their knowledge ; but were of necessity much guided by interested parties : men already in the service of the Institution. And men who were themselves very inefficient and unpopular, were most eager to keep back popular and efficient men. I have heard one, often consulted, eagerly exclaim as touching a man a thousand times his superior, "Oh, it must not be he, whoever it is !" I asked why : and was told that the Boycotted mortal was a man of claptrap, without logic. I soon found that he was a man of brilliant parts : and in a year or two everybody knew it. Then, sometimes, the agent was a narrow, conceited, ignorant man, who would act upon his own judgment, which judgment was generally in flat contradiction to that of mankind

at large. In my youth, I have heard such a one debating the pros and cons which were to guide him in a certain choice : even as a boy, I remember how I chafed at the thought that the qualifications and prospects of men of no small eminence should be sat in judgment upon by one so stupid and incapable. I suppose if one heard a Common Jury debating the pros and cons, one would rather toss up a half-crown than accept the verdict of such fools.

More : the Patron, in very many instances, had a strong feeling of contempt for the order of men among whom he had the power to set a man. No doubt, on all public occasions, he knew better than to express this contempt. On the contrary, he would signify his deep veneration for that order. But I say what I know. And the feeling which I name I have heard (in private) most frankly expressed by Patrons, a good deal more than twice or thrice. They did not express it to me. And as I was a boy, they did not think I took in their meaning. But I did, very clearly. And I have a good memory. Of course, there are things I know which I cannot publicly tell, unless in this general manner. I have heard the phrase, *a little cad*, used of a decent man who was to be put into such an office, by the person who put him in ; and in the sentence in which he expressed his intention to put him in. Now these patrons had a keen dislike to the notion that any of the order to which they appointed could by possibility trench on

their own dignity. They desired to keep them at an immeasurable distance below themselves. They had therefore, in most cases, a great dislike to men of culture and of some position. They would do a great deal, and their factors and agents even more, to keep such back. They did not succeed: through the circumstance that while Patronage lasted, there were important places, the best in the Institution, which were not filled up by high-handed and unlimited patronage. But when a man here and there, in the order to which they appointed, drove his carriage or had his conservatory, they were much aggrieved. They desired that such should be Humble: not as St. Paul was, but as Uriah Heep was. Accordingly, they tried to promote persons who would be subservient, as men of culture and means would not be.

I never knew any mortal stand up for the doomed system, but three classes of folk. First, the patrons themselves, who naturally wished to keep all the power they had: and some of whom would have been glad that the working folk round them should have continued serfs, "their proper position." Next, candidates for office, who knew well that they had not the slightest chance of getting on, unless by Patronage: and who "had influence," "had a friend." Finally, the toadies, underlings, and led captains of the small class in whose hands Patronage was vested. But the country rose, after strife and sorrow which had lasted through generations, and left their trace

in irremediable evils: and said This was to end. And it has ended.

Ah, what glimpses a good many men had, while the system lasted, into its working! Many knew the secret springs to a degree I never did. But I knew a good deal. How foolish are the very wise, and how small the very great, has been made far too generally and clearly known by many volumes of Memoirs published in these last days. These volumes dispel an ignorance whose continuance is much to be desired if certain great worldly positions are to abide, and the doings of those who fill them to be respected. Among other things made plain is this: What bad reasons often weigh with the dispensers of the chief gifts of fortune, in dispensing their favours. Very discreditable motives have many times weighed, in the selection of human beings for high places in Church and State. It would be invidious to mention cases. But it would be extremely easy. I will say, that the relatives of men who got on by means which their relatives durst not indicate (though everybody knows them) ought not to publish the biographies of such men. There is a glaring instance which I know will occur to many who will read this page. Let a man take his half million and get into his grave in silence! We shall not think of him unless he is intruded upon us. Then many will recall the story, though in pity they may not publicly tell it. And where there were not such disgraceful

considerations, very many know well how much mere chance has had to do with the dispensation of great patronage. It is much better that many facts should remain unknown to the commonalty. For the humbler mass of mankind, not knowing the reasons which led to great appointments, have just the same curious confidence in their wisdom which they have in the decision of Chance. There is no judgment which men will so readily bow to as the cast of the die. They accept it, at least. For it is the upshot of unknown causes. Mystery is the chief originator of reverence. When you come to know all about a man and his reasons, in most cases you will not think much of either him or them.

Let us get back to whence we deviated. Patronage was abolished in that mysterious Institution which has not been named. Alas, the reverse of Wrong is not necessarily Right! A system was substituted, which was (by some, I believe, not by all) honestly designed to get rid of old and intolerable evils. Patronage went: and popular election came in. Then, in place of old evils gone, a host of new evils came in: some of them quite as bad as any of the old: some of them (strange to say), on being closely looked into, proving to be just the old back again. The degrading circumstances attending a contested Parliamentary Election, or the Election of Town Councillors in a small community, or the Election of a School Board where illiterate candidates blow their

own trumpets: all came in, and that in a case where it was specially unfit that they should be. Some once hopeful people have pretty well lost heart, seeing how human nature works. Some have sadly recalled a cynical and awful saying of Frederick the Great. All that the most sanguine venture to say is, that when a Revolution has taken place, you must wait some years before you can tell how the new machinery is to work. Things may right themselves. And though sorrowful and humiliating scandals are made widely known by the Press: scandals over which good men can but grieve; it ought to be remembered more generally than it is, that under the present system (as under the old) half-a-dozen quiet and judicious selections are made without attracting notice, for every one where there is a discreditable fight. There are places, unhappily, in which Patronage has not been abolished: it has simply been transferred from educated men, whose position, after all is said, did generally bring some sense of responsibility, and some sense of honour, to the vulgar wire-pullers or bullies of some little community; mortals who tyrannise over their dependants as badly (it could not be worse) as certain nobles and their factors did before the Ballot became law; mortals actuated by the meanest and most selfish motives, and capable of tricks far too dirty for any ordinary squire to touch with his little finger. I really have not heart to speak further of things I

know. But I know things which humble one to the earth : which might make one despair of the republic. All one can say is, that most of the people, according to the light they have, do at least want to get the best man : which many patrons never did. The people may be terribly mistaken : terribly misled by those who play upon their ignorance and prejudice : very incompetent (many of them) to sit in judgment on the qualifications of scholars : very much inclined, when they get sick of strife and division, to rely on the counsel of certain men on whom nobody will rely who knows them, their tricks, their ignorance, their ends. But the people's end is good, though they do not know the way to reach it. And their intelligence is growing : has grown. Surely the day will come when they will judge, and judge wisely, for themselves : without heeding the local demagogue, without consulting the central dodger. They will learn how to eliminate unfit candidates : how to weigh written testimonials : how to estimate vulgar claptrap : how to behave with decency in sacred places : how and in what degree to be guided by their natural leaders, who are assuredly not the noisiest nor the most forward. The announcement will not be made that *No gentleman need apply* : nor that *Candidates had better travel third-class*.

Let me now confess (and the confession is made not for myself only but for nearly all my friends) to an entire incapacity to make up one's mind upon the

question which I have thus brought to the reader's notice. Sometimes, beholding the working of unlimited Patronage, one has said, in wrath, Anything would be better than this. Sometimes, beholding the working of the System which has taken the place of Patronage, one has said, in sorrow, Nothing could be worse than this. In any case, the step taken cannot possibly be retraced. It remains only that all concerned should try to make the best of existing circumstances. What was all very well when working people were serfs, will not do now. And if the mass of mankind should mismanage what is unquestionably its own business, that is its own look-out. There is no probability of the mass of mankind asking a small class of men to manage its business for it. And though the entire subject has cost the writer (and many more) some anxious thoughts, and perhaps a little heart-ache, it is really not for that reason that he brings it before such as shall read this page. If it may be, he would get away from provincial squabbles, which to some people are unutterably distressing, to a calmer region and to questions of wider concern. All that has been said to this point is preliminary to saying that he fears that very many educated folk, in these latter days, are vitally what Byron meant, when he said, *I am of the Opposition*. Possibly my experience is exceptional: but it seems to me that most of the thoughtful men and women I know, by necessity of their nature, see vividly and

feel keenly the objections which make against systems, rather than the reasons which support and (perhaps) justify them : and thus are in practical or only in theoretical opposition to the system of things in which they are involved : and, following upon this, are intensely antipathetic to the leaders and advocates of the existing state of things. Lord Beaconsfield tells us, in his "Life of Lord George Bentinck," how, at a certain juncture in his life, though a Tory, he had been for several years in opposition to the Tory Government and party. Even so, there are in these days Churchmen, who are in keen opposition to the Church, or at least to the way in which the Church is managed : Episcopalians who hate Episcopacy : Presbyterians who have not a good word to say of Presbytery : Scotchmen who are enthusiastically Anglican in all their likings : here and there an Anglican, high in office, who, out of perversity, or exceptional idiosyncrasy, greatly prefers everything Scotch, and frequently says so where it will give great offence to say so. Now, it will not do to explain all this as some would explain it : as by saying of such a man that he is made much more of among strangers than among those who know him better : or of such another man that he is a much bigger person North of the Tweed than South of it, and meets sympathy with his crotchets there as he never would do at home : and that each of these men is in fact actuated by private feeling and (to a great degree) by mere

self-conceit. We all tend to like those who think well of us, and to feel kindly towards the system which these represent. That is certain. But one has known instances of the keenest antipathies and the warmest likings where all considerations of expediency pushed just the other way. Is it a curious morbid manifestation of the mind and heart of this age? We can understand disappointed men crying down the system under which they think they have failed of due appreciation. I have known a worthy mortal declare that the Church of England ought to be disestablished for a single reason, of the most individual concern, and capable of being stated in a single sentence: to wit, that it had used him so badly. We smile at that; and we can understand it. But to find those who have risen highest under any system, keenly condemning the system which has used them so well: plainly putting personal considerations utterly out of sight: not blinded to the actual merits of the question by these: is strange and perplexing. Is it merely the outcome of a crotchety nature? Or has the force of Truth constrained a human being to testify to that which if accepted would be destruction to himself? He is much to be envied who is entirely content with the state of things which he is bound to maintain, and with which his interests are bound up. Some are in that restful condition. And interest has often made men, neither stupid nor bad, maintain that an institution was right, which the conscience of

mankind has decided to be wrong. I suppose there was hardly ever an American slaveholder who did not believe that slavery was right. Not many of those whose income was inflated by making the food of mankind artificially dearer, discerned that the maintenance of the Corn-laws (on the footing of what was called Protection to native industry) was morally wrong. But in my own experience, some of the strongest fighters in support of certain arrangements will tell you privately that they think these arrangements unjustifiable : for that matter, will say so quite publicly. The ground they take is, that the arrangement needs to be mended : they are dissatisfied with it as it is. But if it were mended to the degree they desire, it would cease to be the same arrangement at all. And although such is the position of the cleverest persons known to me, it appears to come of taking a narrow view : of looking at the weights in one scale, and quite forgetting those in the scale opposite. Such persons see, very clearly and vividly, the evils amid which they are placed : they fail to take in that wherever human beings and human things are, there will be evils : their cry is Anywhere, Anywhere, out of these present ills : the illusion possesses them that thus they might come to a region where are no ills at all. Your system may have its inconveniences : In God's name try to mend them. But, sure as you live, if you, after long habit, were to go elsewhere, a host of untried evils which now you do not discern, would

make themselves bitterly manifest, and make you wish you had stayed where you were. Almost any system will do (so it be not morally wrong), when fairly worked by wise and good men ; reasonable and kindly. To think that you, being of a grumbling disposition, could go anywhere in this world where you would not grumble : to think that you, being by necessity of your nature one *of the Opposition*, could anywhere on earth (so to say) vote straight with the Government : to think, in short, to get finally delivered from Evil under any human system, political, ecclesiastical, social : is to fancy you may under a bright sunshine jump off your shadow. Go where you may, there is a dark something which will dog you. Try to make it as little as possible. And as the ages go on, possibly it will grow less and less. But do not think in this latter part of the Nineteenth Century to evade it. And do not stultify all your past life and career, by hasty and ill-considered changes in your worldly position : which, delivering you from some small inconveniences at which it has grown into a habit to grumble, and without which you would hardly know your life, may bring you under the iron gripe of evils never yet experienced, which will squeeze you in a fashion in which you were never squeezed before. You, fine young fellow to whom I talked just two days since, know perfectly well what I desire to say to you : though I am not going to make my meaning more explicit. And a good

many of the younger readers of this page. each in his own sphere and vocation, will greatly need to weigh this advice. You are dissatisfied: Well, go to work to mend what you think wrong: and relieve your heart by grumbling. To many, grumbling is a great safety-valve: blowing off what might otherwise blow up. But, if you have been so much as ten years in your worldly vocation, do not change it. You are not likely to make any better of this life, than by patience and wisdom you may make of the quiet place you fill.

There is more to say to such as feel they are of the Opposition. I said grumbling is a relief. Let me add, like opiates, and some other things in this world, it had better be indulged in sparingly. It is not merely that a man who is evermore complaining of his surroundings, whether private or public, becomes a weariness and sometimes a laughing-stock to all who know him: it is that his own moral nature is sure to be grievously deteriorated thereby. It is selfishness, after all. It really comes to this: that you cannot help going about telling people how uncomfortable you are. What do they care? For any mortal to be continually testifying that he is quite out of sympathy with the Institutions among which he lives, and that their inconveniences make him unhappy, is in truth very little better than that a mortal should annoy the people he meets by constant assurances of his sufferings from dyspepsia. As a

rule, whatever makes a man uncomfortable to himself makes him uncomfortable to other folk. And whenever matters come to this point, that you go on through life cursing things in general, your proper course is to get apart to a solitary place, where nobody will hear you. A very eminent theologian once told me that there were certain characteristics of the community in which he was obliged to live, which he could never think of without swearing. But he added that he always did this inaudibly. Thus his heart was in some measure relieved, and no human soul was scandalised.

It appears to me quite certain that men to whom the trial is appointed of having to live their life amid uncongenial surroundings, to such a degree that they feel themselves vitally and habitually of the Opposition, are in a position of great moral risk. A certain recklessness of expression possesses them. They cease to attempt to conciliate their opponents; they are content to irritate them. Now it is the duty of every man who very clearly sees a truth, to try to get all he can reach to see it too; that is, to think as he does. But when you give up hope of this, when your sad conclusion is that the great majority of men and women are fools, and must continue so, your nature must be embittered. Your views will be jaundiced, and your heart soured. Even if you be a much greater genius than it is likely you are, this will-assuredly be so. And with men very far inferior

to that great writer whose name will occur to some when this is said, one has marked a like embittering process. A cynical despair of doing any good: a sense that one is fighting a hopeless battle: a contempt for the ruck of those to whose views and ways you are in opposition, and (it must be said) a keen personal hatred for their leaders: a strong belief that the followers are idiots and the leaders rogues: such are the things which tend to come to the man who is vitally and has been long of the Opposition. They are very unhappy things. Furthermore, unless you are sure you are right in a sense which only direct inspiration from above can make any man, what claim have you to come to this? Is it not better to conclude that you have arrived at exceptional opinions: and that what you see so clearly may be an angle of truth peculiar to yourself, and discerned because of your nature or your point of view? I know it is vain to suggest this. The very last thing you will get any mortal to take in is, that his cherished opinions are no more than Crotchets; and that he himself, instead of being an inspired prophet, is merely a crotchety man.

Once you have got the length of being proud that you stand alone, and that you think differently from mankind at large, you are in a perilous way. One read, with a good deal of disgust, a statement by a self-sufficient writer, setting forth views which if accepted would absolutely go crashing to the heart

of all that the best of the race have believed since the beginning, that these views would in a few years be accepted by "the *elite* of mankind." The phrase was hateful: the idea insolent. It reminded one of a silly woman declaring that "Everybody one ever meets in Society goes to our church:" and further, that in the region where she dwelt, "there was hardly a soul in Society." "Ourselves, here, and the Snookses ten miles off: that is pretty well all!" Social pride of caste is bad, that intellectual is a great deal worse. And I am quite sure I have known those who, so far from seeking to proselytise, would have been supremely mortified if the mass of plain folk round them had come to think and act as they did; upon a matter of no small importance. We are the people: and the profane vulgar we exclude. That a thing be *exclusive* is to some folk the very strongest recommendation. And such folk are the *vulgar*, in the sharpest truth.

Further; in all that has been said hitherto I am taking for granted that those who may be described as of the Opposition, are if not wiser, certainly cleverer than the mass of the people around them. For the fact is assuredly so in the region which I have in my mind: the region moral and intellectual. For in that region, the great majority are dominated by that unreasoning conviction that it is safest to keep things as they are, and that all change is dangerous, which gained for a certain organisation

of human beings the name of the *Stupid Party*. The brighter and smarter minds are generally inclined to move rather than to sit still: and such minds cannot look at manifest evils without desiring to mend them. It is in some to be ever reaching after something better: it is in others to sit down content that things are no worse; and with a fear that any change would be for the worse. But now let it be said, that however the fact may be in this and that exceptional sphere, it does not follow of necessity that he who is of the Opposition is cleverer than those who would keep things as they are. Doctor Keene is unquestionably a far brighter man than Doctor Log: and these two are in my mind as I write. But here and there one has known a mortal who was dissatisfied with everything about him, not because he was cleverer, but because he was stupider than the people who were content with them. A cantankerous fool, conceited and wrong-headed, will probably find fault with every institution he knows: but not such are entitled to be ranked with those whom I have named as of the Opposition. He is not to be ranked with Carlyle or Landor or Godwin as they were from youth to age; nor with Byron, Shelley, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, in their youth. If a man cannot see that two and two make four, nor follow the reasoning which proves that the earth is round, he is merely a blockhead. And the fact, that he believes himself wiser than mankind at large, comes

only of the density of his stupidity. Let not the man, nor the half-dozen men, who stand alone in the order to which they belong, in profound opposition to ninety-nine in the hundred, make too sure that this proves them wiser or farther-seeing than the majority. Even if they be not hopelessly stupid and perverse, it may be only that they are passing through an immature and morbid stage in their growth; which they will live through, which they will leave far behind. Shelley and Byron died while still in a transient and provisional state of mind: that state in which you have but to look at an established opinion or institution to be repelled from it. Wordsworth and Southey lived through that early experience; and arrived at normal ways of thinking and feeling. They came, in fact, to think of the existing condition of things in State and Church pretty much as ordinary folk do: except that their belief was a vast deal deeper founded. They had made the round, which ordinary folk do not need to make; and they had come back to the point at which they had begun. Only they stood there, not as ignorant and untravelled men, who did not know what was elsewhere. They had seen what was to be seen; and concluded that it was well, all things considered, to stand on the old ways. The old ways, that is, as concerning the very few things which make vital and invariable truth.

A practical consideration, to be remembered by such as wish to be of some use in their generation is,

That if the little strength which is in you is to be turned to account, and not wasted in fruitless antagonism, it is necessary that a man (in all but the most exceptional case) should join himself to some considerable organisation of men. And you will never in fact join yourself to any organisation, if you refuse to do so until you have found one with which you are perfectly content down to the minutest detail. If you think to find a church, or a political party, or a society of any sort, which shall be precisely what you would have made it, you will be disappointed. Compromise is the only thing that will practically do in this world. I know good and great men, one or two, who are under the vain delusion that the millions of Christian folk will ultimately come to think as they do (which no doubt they believe to be as God does) even to the last particular of a highly complicated scheme of doctrine, worship, and government. Vainer delusion never possessed human soul. The days are gone in which men would follow a leader like a flock of sheep, in the concern of their most serious belief. In these times wherein every working man reads his penny newspaper, and sits in judgment upon the doings and character of the chiefest of the race (often arriving at the most preposterous judgment), you will not get some thousands or even some hundreds of human beings to form themselves into an organisation and to pull together, unless by each being ready to yield something, to accept an institution which in the

main he thinks good, though he may wish it other than it is in fifty details. You may be, as long as you live, a jibbing horse in the team ; yet, after all, your little strength goes towards getting the coach southward. If so, you may be content ; even if your desire be to make for that point of the compass which I saw described in a poem of American origin, as "Sou' Sou' East by a little Sou'." And possibly you alone among the sons of men are set on reaching the point thus compendiously indicated. No doubt, you will sometimes find it hard to feel yourself wholly out of sympathy with the great majority of the people among whom you live, and indeed bitterly antipathetic to the ways of their leading men. That is your cross ; and good men have had to bear heavier. But you would do little good in this world if you stood alone upon the earth's face, a solitary and embittered Ishmaelite. And if your hand were against every man, you would (unless you passed wholly without notice) find that the hand of most men would be against you. There are awful warnings, in an unfortunate country known to some, of the consequences of splitting off from all save those with whom you are at one on all points. "How many people are there in the Catholic Church of Christ?" was the question once put to an intensely opinionated and stupid old Scotchwoman. "'Deed," was the reply, "there's just John (her husband) and me ; and whiles I'm no very sure about John." Do not fancy that this was a joke.

It was deadly earnest. A good and eminent man, of large views, told me that he once said to a man of gloomy genius (who came to a sad end) these words :—

“The population of this world is about twelve hundred millions. The population of the little country in which you live is three millions. The little sect in that little country to which you belong numbers (say) four hundred thousand. Does it consist with your idea of the great Being who made all men, to think that He would allow all mankind, except that four hundred thousand, to remain in utter ignorance of certain truths which it is vital to believe : yet which not a soul on earth believes beyond that four hundred thousand ; and in that number probably not a hundred understand, or could explain intelligibly?”

The gloomy genius considered for a minute, and then replied : “Yes, it does consist with my idea of the Creator and Moral Governor that He should permit that.” My friend replied, “You must be either a most selfish or a most unhappy man. I would much sooner believe that black is white, or that two and two might make twenty.”

But many good folk regarded my friend as an Infidel, or even as an Atheist, for that he uttered such sentiments.

“Why do you stay where you are?” said a blatant

vulgarian to one of the most accomplished men I know, "if you disapprove so many things about it?" "Because I hope to take some little part in mending these things," was the reply. "I can, with a good conscience, stay where I am; the things I think wrong are not of vital moment; and, on the whole, I think I can do more good where I am than I could do elsewhere; therefore I stay where I was born and reared."

The question was bellowed at the top of a singularly untunable voice, in a most truculent manner, as though it were a question to which no answer was possible. The answer was given with much gentleness and courtesy, though with a warning eye. There was a bludgeon on one side, a rapier on the other. And the answer appeared to me one to which no replication could be made.

Yet many of those who were present did not think so. They thought the uneducated blusterer had shut up the cultured scholar. They went away, and said he had. Yet, what should we think of the intelligence of those who should reply to a man who said, "That ugly marsh must be drained; that bare hill must be planted"—"Be off to America, if you are discontented with your country as it is!"

Even such is the logic (if the word be permitted) to which the writer and many more have to listen sometimes.



CHAPTER XVI.

CONCERNING THE CHEERFULNESS OF THE OLD.



REMEMBER the words vividly, and the bright little face of the human being who uttered them. For memory is wilful : it retains just what it chooses. And it rejects, utterly, things much more valuable. One is frightened, in these later days, at the strange fashion in which old sayings and events recur : looks of people we did not especially care for : sentences long forgotten by the person who said them, and neither wise nor witty ; yet coming vividly up, without reason which we can discern.

“ I am awfully jolly ; and I don't know why.”

These were the words. They were addressed to the present writer by a little boy of ten years old, who had previously been looking for a few minutes as though he had something to say which he hesitated about saying. Finally they were uttered : and they were listened to with all befitting sympathy. There

are folk (religious folk) who would so receive such a bit of confidence from a little boy, that he never would confide in them again in this world. It is easy to freeze up a confiding little boy : and to some folk it comes natural and pleasant. There are human beings (I have known them) who would hasten to inform such a little boy that he had no business to be happy : that nobody has any business to be happy. You remember Lord Neaves' touching song, "Let us all be unhappy on Sunday." That song is no doubt excellent, so far as it goes. But it is defective : *there is a want in it*, as folk used to say in Ayrshire in the writer's boyhood. To complete the sentiment, there ought to be added, *likewise from Monday morning till Saturday night*. So should an elevated and attractive life be fully sketched out. For this world is cursed : and assuredly some of its inhabitants are so in a high degree. I have known such a little boy as I have named to receive the information that for holding such views the likelihood was that he would be hanged in this world and sent to perdition in the next. And, though the little boy did not believe it, he was surrounded by such as did. For even as this (briefly said) is the outcome of the religious creed of some still surviving ; and in this fashion they lift up their testimony.

But this by the by. I go back to what is pleasanter. "I am awfully jolly ; and I don't know why."

You looked at the little boy in question ; and you

perceived that the fact was so. He was a sensitive little man, of a nervous temperament. That he was sensibly happy was manifest ; and you must take his word that there was no assignable reason. It was not the beginning of holiday time. Neither had some sympathetic soul, once a schoolboy too, largely tipped him. It was an immemorial day. Of course, one knew why the little man felt happy. It was because he was so very well. Jollity, or cheerfulness, is the outcome of high health. And the over-sensitive nature, which knew its occasional seasons of depression, has its times of lifting-up too. High health will keep even awfully bad folk cheerful. An accusing conscience is silent, sometimes, in the presence of superb bodily health. So the Borgias knew. They were very bad : horribly. Probably the world never contained a viler pack. But they were always cheerful, and always good-natured. They would not poison you unless you somehow stood in their way. Then they would get rid of you without a moment's uneasiness. That which is called *Compunction* they knew not at all. And they were equably cheerful. There were no Ups and Downs. It was not as with Jeffrey, often very happy without knowing why ; and then in the depths with as little assignable reason. A placid friend once entered his study. Jeffrey looked up from his table, and said, "The greatest human blessing is Equanimity." Then he went on to say, "I am thankful you have come in. Before you came in, I

was perfectly miserable, and I did not know why. I would give all I have in the world for your temperament." And doubtless the sweet-natured and cheerful man to whom the words were said was an enviable mortal. He never trod upon air: but he never had to cry out *De Profundis*. And there is worse. To wit, to be in the Depths and not be able to cry out at all.

These things are Introductory. Let it now be said that even as the little schoolboy was awfully jolly and did not know why, so many aging and old folk are tolerably cheerful without ever thinking why. The cheerfulness of the old needs explanation. For it is there: often in very marked measure. And at first thought, it does not seem reasonable. The reason is all the other way. You remember, reader, how as a boy you wondered to see an old man laughing heartily at a dinner-table; or telling a story with manifest enjoyment. His face was wrinkled; and baggy beneath the eyes. Many of his teeth were gone, and all his hair. His wife was dead: and his children scattered: one or two of them had gone to the bad. Yet he was cheerful: neither you nor he knew why. You never heard anybody laugh so loud as such old men. Telling a story has been named; but you have even heard such sing a comic song. In your inexperience you looked at him with much pity. You thought he ought to be dead: or, in any case, that if he had any discernment he would forthwith lie down and die.

The surest and safest cheerfulness is that which comes to us without our knowing why. For it is the resultant of our own nature, and it makes us independent of external causes. It is even as the most hopeless depression is that for which you could give no particular reason. For when you say that *everything is going wrong*, the meaning is, that you are unhappy and do not know why. Our whole nature has for the present grown into that condition that we see all things as black: and all facts seem reasons to be miserable. You cannot look into a book without finding something still further to jar the jarred spirit within you. You cannot talk to a friend but something said touches the raw. When a depressed mortal gives you a reason for his depression, it is for the most part plainly a mere peg on which to hang a fact which would (just at present) remain hanging up though the peg were away. Here is a curious difference between the material and the spiritual: a difference (I mean) at the first view. A table stands on legs. If you cut away the legs in succession, the table goes down. But a mental state: a mood, even an opinion: often stands all the firmer when the legs are away. You show an old lady, or an old gentleman, that the reasons which he (or she) gives you for holding some political or theological belief are absolutely futile: and if you be young, and unversed in the ways of humanity, you fancy you have converted the old lady or gentleman to the right way of thinking: the

fact meanwhile being that the groundless belief is held more tenaciously than ever. In truth, the convictions you hold most resolutely are those for which you could give no reason. They are the outcome of your whole nature in body and soul ; and of the training of your entire life. The conviction may be sound and right. Many mortals besides the proverbial Scotch Judge arrive at sound conclusions without assignable process of reason : and if they tried to state their reasons, they would not merely state reasons which are unsound, but reasons which they are well aware never guided them to the conclusion to which they have come. They *see* that a thing is true : that is all. Or, if there be reasons which in fact determined their stand-point, the reasons are such as cannot be stated. There is no commoner nor more painful insincerity than that of the man who laboriously explains to some public assembly why he has concluded or has acted as in fact he has ; it being a perfectly open secret that the reasons assigned had nothing earthly to do with the action or the conclusion. For that matter, probably the majority of political and legislative acts are done for reasons which the doer of them does not honestly state : which he durst not state. Yet perhaps the thing was quite right to be done.

But we must not get away upon a siding : that is, not get away too far. Old folk, when they are cheerful at all, are cheerful as the little schoolboy was jolly, never thinking why : not wishing to think why. There

are moral facts which vanish under the microscope; which exhale wholly under analysis. The wise will accept a hopeful and buoyant mood and be thankful for it, not looking too minutely into the question of its reasonableness. As for you, youthful reader, you fancy things are reasons for ceasing to be hopeful and cheerful which in fact are not. You think that an old man will soon be dead, and therefore that he should be looking gloomy. You think that he has not made much of his life so far, and can never now come to anything big or fine : *You* would be very discontented, you know, were you (with your present feelings) placed as he is placed : and you think he must needs be discontented. You would not care to live at all, you think, if you had made as poor a thing of your worldly career as the old man has : and if you looked as shaggy and ugly : You wrongly fancy that he sees himself and his belongings and surroundings as they appear to you. Possibly he is extremely pleased with himself, and with everything about him : the capacity of adaptation to circumstances and of being quite pleased with the inevitable is (God be thanked) something wonderful. The hard-featured old woman you saw last night, vested in velvet and priceless lace, and blazing with diamonds that would fetch thousands of pounds, had been quite able to persuade herself that she was a beautiful object to behold : though in fact she was not. Not a trace of envy clouded the real though somewhat patronising kindness with which

you beheld her converse with divers blooming girls in their fresh and buoyant spring-time.

Let the meaning of the terms used in the present Dissertation be settled. Our thoughts are to be of the Cheerfulness of the Old. But who are the Old?

It is to be admitted that here is a matter concerning which one's views have undergone change. For the present, let it be accepted that a man between forty and fifty is growing old. Between fifty and sixty he is somewhat advanced in life. Between sixty and seventy he is old. Between seventy and eighty he is aged. Above eighty he is venerable or patriarchal. But here idiosyncrasy is everything. It all depends upon the individual man. One shall be tottering on the brink of the grave, every sense having failed and that which he esteemed his mind quite feeble and overclouded, at a stage in life whereat another is bright, active, serviceable as ever. To fix eighty as the age of enforced retirement from public duty would have deprived Venice of her octogenarian chief, Dandolo; she never had a better: would have deprived England of the service of a Prime Minister and a Chief Justice who were superbly equal to their work. And some who will read this page never knew brighter or courtlier gentlemen, with every sense and faculty entire, than one soon to be eighty-four. "We told our brother that he was doited," was the remark of a venerable dignitary who always used the plural of dignity: and who was speaking of one ten years his

junior. And the statement was unquestionably true. Nor could mortal man have suggested the *Tu quoque*.

Not only the hale and well-preserved among the aged, and the aging, may be found retaining that cheerfulness which always implies a certain self-satisfaction : there are forms of bodily disability which are quite compatible with this enviable attribute. Not merely in cosy easy-chairs round the great fire in the library of a Club may you discern the white heads of men far beyond seventy, with faces of serene self-complacency and calm enjoyment ; but in less likely places too. Pretty late this very afternoon did the present writer, looking with approval upon two old fogies (suffer the expressive phrase), each tranquilly comfortable over his newspaper, discover a short paragraph in a certain periodical which affected him with profound satisfaction. For the paragraph stated that a scientific man of wide and deserved fame, stricken with physical weakness, retained his mental activity and likewise his good spirits. He is in his seventy-second year, and is shut up in the house through bodily infirmity, not unattended with sharp suffering. But "his cheerfulness remains unimpaired : " and he is able to carry on his reading and his researches in bed ; his best working hours being from six to ten in the morning. Long may his cheerfulness abide : though one would wish that as soon as may be he should be able to work in a locality better suited to an active mind in active exercise.

The moral table, it was said, appears to stand quite firmly though each of its legs be in succession removed. But this is only in appearance. In the spiritual world, everything that subsists must have a cause, just as certainly as in the material. If the table stands steadfastly after the legs have been reft away, this is because it never was really sustained by these legs; but by others, which remain untouched. And though the cheerfulness of the old may appear to the young as a thing without reason, it is in fact a thing whose reasons exist, though it may not be easy just at the instant to state them. Though the little schoolboy did not know why he felt happy, there was good reason why: reason, that is, adequate to explain the phenomenon. And in seeking the causes, latent and apparent, known and never thought of, of the paradoxical fact of the cheerfulness of many who know that their worldly hopes and plans have been mainly disappointed, that their life on the whole has been a failure, and that the end must be drawing near while they have but a very misty conception of anything beyond it,—a conception which in fact comes to this, that everything they really cared for will be gone,—we look just to that physical and moral make into which the whole man insensibly grows. It is very remarkable how, in the case of some who went through the active years of their life with spirits almost equally depressed, and under a constant load of anxiety, the cloud has lifted when they came to that period at which the sun might have been

expected to go down, or to get behind the clouds of the sunset. And it was not that they had reasoned themselves into resignation, nor that they had really gained a firmer trust in a good Power above them : It was just that they had somehow come out from under the gloom, and unknowingly grown tranquil and cheerful. The growth, doubtless, was mainly physical. They gained in bodily health and strength : they learned to live by rule, to practise strict temperance, to forswear those deadly poisons of body and mind which are called *Stimulants*, which if they ever lifted mortal up, ended by dropping him a good deal lower down than where they found him. Their nerves grew less sensitive : they had got through the critical climacteric periods at which the machine asks whether it shall go on or stop. They know the meaning of taking a new lease of life ; and, not expecting so much, they in fact get more. We used to be told, in the days wherein we studied Moral Philosophy (it included Natural Theology), that one proof of the Divine benevolence lay in the fact that the healthful play of the bodily organs resulted in a sense of happiness. The difficulty one felt was about the fact asserted : for a lot of healthy young fellows were ready to testify that they were not happy. But then it was replied, that we were so accustomed to feel happy that we did not know when we were so : that the healthful play of the physical machinery was so familiar to us that we ceased to remark it ; but that if any wheel in it did for awhile

go painfully wrong, we should then duly value the following ease. And abundant experience has doubtless shown that this last statement is true. No doubt, too, the mortal in advancing years whose system is eupeptic, and whose nerves are unshaken by excess, tends to be sensibly cheerful. After the turbulence and excitements of earlier days, there comes a certain calm. And the declining life, which it sometimes frightened one to think of, proves to be the best of all. There is the calm brightness of the Martinmas Summer. And looking back over many years to such a season amid rural scenes of inexpressible beauty, it seems to-day as though not the reviving Spring, not the miraculous glory of the Midsummer days in unforgotten Galloway, could reach one so intimately as did the breathless stillness of the golden woods in the tender sunshine of early November. These things hushed one as not the holy place of the most regal church can always do. They abide in the memory a possession for ever : so much is sober fact : and they have calmed amid divers irritations. The most unmannerly Puritan cannot ruffle one, vividly remembering such hours. And yet they do not make too pleasant a comparison, thinking of the sweetness and gentleness of certain among the aging men and women one has known. The little children, we know on the highest of all authority, could remind One who knew them of the inhabitants of a better Place ; but it seems, too, as though rounding to the close, divers of

our Race grow into something that can be but a very little lower. You, kindly reader, do not rank yourself with such : but you are on the outskirts of the Company : You are aware of some little of the calm of the later life which has thus resulted. You are fifty and more, you are sixty and more, you are seventy and more : but these are the best days you have known. To be prosaic, you feel extremely well ; and accordingly, you feel remarkably cheerful. Nothing ruffles you. Everything to be done seems easy : all the surroundings are pleasant : all the outlook is encouraging. Former experience has taught you to value this conscious health. It is not with you quite as it was with old Montaigne, who says, " I am ready to jump out of my skin for joy, as for an uncommon favour, when nothing ails me : " and indeed it was worth while to go through a good deal to arrive at such a stand-point. But jumping is not much in your way : only you are conscious of a tranquil, pervading, abiding satisfaction. Your condition, let it be confessed, is somewhat akin to that of the cat reposing before the fire. You feel comfortable. And it is a great thing to feel comfortable : it is a much greater thing to have the faculty of making others feel comfortable. There are those human beings to whom you cannot speak for two minutes in the street without being jarred, rubbed the wrong way,—in brief, made thoroughly uncomfortable. You come away from them, sore all over, jaundiced, suspicious, angry with

yourself and with all the world. They generally intend to bring about this result : and he who intends to do this will commonly succeed in his aim. And, though in my experience they have always been religionists of peculiar creed and peculiar spirit, they sneak about this world doing the very Devil's work, if such be permitted to man. Sometimes they are blatant bullies : sometimes wire pulling dodgers : but they aim at the same end : which is, briefly, to make their fellow-creatures uncomfortable ; and so to make them bad. No creed can by possibility exclude the existence of Incarnate Devils. But it is a grand thing to go about making all you meet better. And this is done by making them happier. If *Happy* be a high-flown word, substitute *Comfortable*. With æsthetic disapproval of a very keen character, but not without some measure of moral sympathy, did the writer lately hear of a homely preacher of a little Sect, which need not be named, who, in performing the ceremony (if the term be permitted) at a Wedding, briefly summed up the function and vocation of the better part of Humankind. It was in a country which for two centuries has been deprived of Liturgical aids : and where, oftentimes to the consternation of such as are both cultivated and devout, each preacher is required to provide prayers for himself. In the most simple-minded fashion, the decent man signified that he was speaking solely in the name of that half of mankind in which he was

himself reckoned, when he thus expressed himself: "We thank Thee that Thou hast given us Wumman, to make us Koamfortable." Probably the darning of stockings and the ordering of dinner were latently in the poor man's mind, thus expressing himself. But higher vocation can hardly be than to make life smoother, kindlier, more sympathetic, more charitable, than it could be conceived as being in the absence of those whom every man worth reckoning will hasten to acknowledge for incomparably the Best of the Race. In the hard relations of business, in the devil-developing rejoinders of religious controversy, many men are horribly disagreeable as it is. But what this world would be without women, only the controversialist and the Devil know.

Yes : you are tranquilly comfortable : you are tolerably good : you are sensibly cheerful. The short look-out contents. You do not trouble yourself much about it. You have learned to take short views. You do not plan far ahead. Experience has taught you that it is needless : that it is vain : many needless fears and anxieties you have already known : the way grew smooth and the cloud lifted when you came to the place : so it will be again. You will not suffer yourself to-day to be bearing the burden of many days to come. One at a time. He was a wise man, and something more, that American President who one morning said to an evil-foreboding friend, "My rule through life has been, never to cross the Great Big-

muddy Creek till I came to it." I could quote very grave words, expressing exactly the same sentiment: but not here. And I could, if need were, quote an authority several millions of times more venerable than great and good Abraham Lincoln. All I add is that till we learn by lengthened education, we all tend to cross the Great Bigmuddy Creek many times before we come to it, and find it in anticipation a great deal bigger and more muddy than in fact it proves to be. I recall very clearly a good old lady of eighty years who said to me, "Do you know I used to be always keeping myself anxious by looking ahead, but now I am quite happy, and I'll tell you how I do it. *Day by day, day by day.*" She meant what she said, I know. And she did it.

I said, *The short look-out contents.* You don't feel the horizon pressing you too closely. You have space in which to stretch yourself. A little will do if your mind be healthy. Nor is the look-out, in fact, so much shorter. All you have had of life is so much saved out of the fire. You never were sure of it till you had lived it. You never could count certainly on a day ahead at any time, however early in your life. And you are in no worse condition now. The possible time before you is much less, doubtless. But you hope for the best. You look for the best. There is better, doubtless. But you know what I mean. The consent of wise and good folk, free from morbid and transient moods, has concluded that long

life is a blessing. It cannot be the greatest, or it would not be denied to so many. It may be a kindly permitted illusion, that it is a blessing at all: but it is well the illusion is permitted, if it be one. And as for averages, we disregard all such calculations in our own case. You fancy yourself to be such an exceptional being, that you look (most look) for exceptional length of life too. I have remarked this decidedly, in men who in fact are wiser than men in general. Besides that the short look-out contents: that we can enjoy the golden and brown Autumn leaves without intruding thoughts of the bleak wet Winter boughs; besides the fact, too, that transience sometimes adds a singular enjoyment as well as a beauty which is all its own: the healthy mind lives in a pervading atmosphere rather than a defined conviction that the end is not so near after all, and cheerfully calculates on a good long time yet. A little since, talking with a dear friend who has been lifted high, my friend Brown said something implying that they both must soon bid the beloved work and the beautiful surroundings farewell. "Not at all," said the energetic and healthful pillar of the State: "I look forward, please God, for other twenty years." And Brown was corrected. For even after the twenty years, the pillar of the State would only be seventy-four: and wherefore count on abridgment of honour and usefulness? Brown was six months the younger; but by being overworked and worried, he had got into

the way of mistily thinking that about three or four years would see the last of him. And indeed there are those who early in September feel as though the Winter were upon them ; and who at thirty-three talk of themselves as old. But this is wrong as well as depressing. Some cannot help it. John Foster was a great man ; but his ways of thinking on most matters were essentially morbid. Never more so than in the grievous fashion in which he anticipated needlessly soon the Winter which he specially dreaded. "I have seen a fearful sight to-day," he once said : "I have seen a buttercup." He could not enjoy the present greenness and warmth, for intrusive fears of the coming cold and desolation. He was wrong : far wrong. You don't blame him : you pity him. But, body and mind, he never knew brisk health. There are a great many thoughts which it is quite fit that we resolutely put away. A mischievous mortal, desiring to overcloud the blink of sunshine in which others are rejoicing, does not need to tell them anything that is not true. You remember Mr. Croaker, and his frequent sentiment : "Heaven send we all be as well this day six months !" Then a shadow would fall upon the faces of middle-aged folk ; as when a meddling idiot asks them what they are to make of their boys. Those things are thought of quite often enough, be sure ; without the idiot's inopportune interference.

Besides the cheerfulness which comes without a reason thought of, as the resultant of the firmer health

into which you have got as you have grown older, the firmer health which has many times made an insurance office accept at fifty a life which had been declined at forty-five, there is a lightening which founds upon considerations in the nature of reasons for it, which affects us sometimes consciously, sometimes latently, but always very really. Let me name one great fact. You know now, after doing your work for twenty-five or thirty years, that you can do it. You are master of your work : which once you were very far from being. You do now, quite confidently and easily, what it was, once upon a time, a terrible nervous pull upon you to do. Long practice has given you skill. Your labour is now skilled labour. And if you want an example, hard by you, that shall vividly bring home to you what difference there is between skilled labour and unskilled, between accustomed work and unaccustomed, though the faculties were originally exactly the same, just try to write a letter, swiftly and legibly, with your left hand. Practice has made all the difference between writing with your left hand and your right, but it is a mighty difference. Even such is the difference between the preacher at fifty and at twenty-five. The preacher of fifty, supposing him to be a successful man in his vocation, ascends his pulpit confidently : looks upon his congregation not without the sense of authority, and of assured position ; has voice and mind under entire control : knows thoroughly all the little arts

which will arouse flagging attention, whether in treatment and illustration of his subject, or in use of voice and gesture and eye. Nothing on earth but experience could give this thorough training. And its result is unconscious in its working. Without ever thinking of the matter, you have beheld the practised orator say and do exactly what was needed. And more. I have a friend, a most eloquent and charming preacher (alas that he diverted to infinitely less important work gifts not vouchsafed to many men in any one generation), who tells me that when he first entered the Church, and was early placed in the sole charge of a large parish, he was oftentimes possessed with an awful fear that Sunday would come round, and he would have no sermon ready at all, good or bad. And sometimes, truly, it was hard enough work to have it ready. But after many years' experience you know that the sermon is sure. You may barely manage it; but you will manage it somehow. I do not here suggest that the passing years will accumulate material which is so speedily forgotten by the average hearer that in about four it may again be held as new. I mean that a strong assurance grows that something will come against the hour that needs it. The morning comes on which you have to preach. You are quite easy, though you are quite blank. The best you can ever say may of a sudden be given you: in any case, there will be something to say. Only the experience of lengthened time

could give you this comfort. One speaks of the work one knows best ; one has found most trying. You go to church in very good time : but you are quite free from nervousness, on most days. My friend Smith has told me on several occasions that never till he dies will he forget the first morning on which he officiated in his own church. There were two services each Sunday : and only by preaching extempore at one of them could he face his work at all. He had carefully considered what he should say, and made a few notes of it as landmarks : but the words must be provided on the moment. There were nearly a thousand people in church, and he had never tried to preach without book before. It would not have done, either, quite to fail : it might have ruined a respectable career. As it proved, extreme nervous tension gave him a fluency which astonished himself. But each Sunday morning in later years, thinking of the miserable trepidation of the youth of five-and-twenty he was, Smith is well reconciled to being a good deal older. The aging mortal, too, doing any public duty, has the comfort of knowing that not much depends upon any single appearance. People know his mark. If he do exceptionally well, they will not think the better of him on the whole. Nor though he do exceptionally ill will they think the worse of him.

In other matters than duty, the years you have seen have taught you what is cheering. You know

that if you get into a scrape you will get out of it again: not to say that you know better than to get into scrapes. In earlier days, when things went wrong, you fancied they would never come right again. Now, you have a strong belief that things will right themselves somehow.

Then, you get accustomed to things; and so get reconciled to them. Use reconciles one to most things. It pretty nearly equalises the actual enjoyment of all places in this life; if only you be free from actual pain and from shame. Here is a great source of the cheerfulness of the old: probably the main secret of it, after all. You are subdued to your position and surroundings: you are in a manner content. You have left off thinking of getting higher, or farther on. You know you have got to the end of your tether. If you have not got what you wished at first, and anticipated, you know you have got all you are to get. Why worry, and push; when nothing will come of it? If you be the reader I want, you never worried, nor pushed: but oh how much of these you have beheld in those around you! You chose a walk in life which you thought wholly excluded worldly ambition. You have found, with grief, it is not so. It is only that an awfully inferior lot contend for the deplorable little prizes attainable. A Donkey is as eager to win a donkey-race, as a magnificent thoroughbred to win the Derby. Mac-Tattle is as earnest to be a prominent spouter in the

Town Council of his little bourg, as Lord Beaconsfield ever was to lead the House of Commons. To souls of peculiar nature, and singular antecedents, there is room for ambition anywhere. What appears to worthy folk a very Valley of Humiliation is to some as the summit of Mont Blanc. And they assert themselves in one of two ways: by vulgar bluster, or by specially mean wire-pulling. The outcome of the whole mode of life one has remarked to be spite, envy, jealousy, violent depreciation of other folk, and unscrupulous dishonesty. "A leein' body" was the Doric description which an honest man gave of a conspicuous animal in such a sphere. And the frantic hold which such unworthy creatures keep upon any little molehill whose top they have reached, is (if possible) exceeded by their frantic terror lest anybody else attain the molehill's summit. Of course, "the worm will do his kind." But it is disagreeable to see him do it: disagreeable to be within some miles of him as he is doing it. You feel it is degradation even to behold the sorry sight. And it makes you very angry. Now, though *sæva indignatio* be often quite right, it is wearing. And unless you be a man like Mr. Carlyle (which is improbable, though you try to write like him), you had best exclude it. For you will not much help your kind, while you will appreciably harm yourself.

But you, worthy and downright reader, have learned to be content. You learnt it long ago. But with

these advancing years, you have learnt it very thoroughly: you are content to a degree that surprises yourself. You take mortifying facts with entire composure. You know that your success, though scanty, is quite as great as your desert. There are vulgar folk, or possibly only thick-skinned folk, who every now and then show you in the frankest fashion how little they think of you: but you really do not mind at all. Many years ago, a young parson, known to me, told me with some bitterness that Miss Lime-juice had inquired of him whether he was to preach next Sunday: and learning that he was not, had said, musingly, "Oh, then we must make a point of coming to church." A few years later, he would not have regarded the good old woman's suggestion at all. People are quite entitled to think ill of you. And though cultivated folk do not commonly tell you so, even among them there are some who will. And plainer folk will reveal their estimate of you with no polite disguise whatever. "We have got a far cleverer man than you into the Town Council," said a man in South America recently to a friend of mine, thinking to mortify him. But my friend replied, with much sweetness of temper, "I see you are a man of discernment: I entirely agree with you." And, thinking of the fashion in which as you grow old you get quite reconciled to things which you kicked at sorely in earlier years, let me mention the sad necessity laid upon many men of highly-cultivated taste in a

country well known to me, of living among the most horribly ugly surroundings. I speak of the surroundings which are man's handy-work. Nature, in that country, is not unfrequently very beautiful : sometimes this is felt as compensation : sometimes the contrast between man's works, and those of the Creator, aggravates the suffering with which man's works are beheld. Not in Ceylon, but in Perthshire, there are spots where every prospect pleases ; and only the buildings which man has erected (both secular and ecclesiastical) are incredibly vile. Yet folk came to take it patiently. There was keen suffering, at first, in the æsthetic young Scotch parson, each time he entered his awful kirk, each time he listened to the frightful caterwauling of his flock, led in their praise by a broken-winded precentor of fourscore years, so decent a man that he could not be got rid of. But now the young parson, having held his charge for thirty years, and having signally failed in all endeavours to improve his church or mend his music, talks to you of both with a sad but resigned smile. He tried to get a choir, and they thought it *thaytrical* (that was the word) : he got designs for the restoration of the church, but objection was taken that they would make the little building a *Popish Panorama*. And he was beaten. Yet he took it contentedly. I know such men well, at this moment, who may be reckoned by scores. The Archbishop of Canterbury said some words, last summer, which I should like to

hear quoted at what is called in the North a *Meeting of Heritors* ; not that the words would produce the smallest good effect. "I am sure," said the sensible and unfanciful Scotchman, "that the general effect of looking day after day upon a hideous building is debasing ; I will not say demoralising." Let the words be repeated ; and then let those present look around the frightful edifice in which they are assembled. A friend of the writer, a man who is something more than an honour to the class to which he belongs, recently declared, on a public occasion, that certain folk in Scotland are bound to provide not a parish church in each parish, but a building capable of being used as a parish church. And then to think of the men who in many cases must exercise their function in such buildings ; Norman Macleod doing his work to the last in the execrable hovel which at Glasgow is still called the Barony Church. There must be the staple of goodness in very many Scotch human beings, if the Archbishop was right ; for they are not debased nor demoralised utterly, though it has pleased God to subject them to the great trial of "looking day after day upon a hideous building." Most grievous of all is his case who ministers in an edifice which was once, and for centuries, magnificent : which a few thousands of pounds would make magnificent again : who would willingly undertake to find the needful money : but who would not be permitted in course of law to move a finger towards

restoration so long as half a score of ignorant block-heads choose to interpose their vulgar veto. I am by no means sure that it is well to be content while things are so : one ought to be up and at the malicious and untutored sectaries till they are shamed. But there are mortals who by their make are hardly capable of being shamed. And in trying to shame them you would probably put yourself into a fever : and fail after all. Well, the tide is flowing. Things will be set right in time : but perhaps not in our time. Meanwhile, some folk try to fancy themselves resigned, or even content ; when in fact they are only beaten. And such get very low down. I know a clergyman who proposed to put a window of coloured paper in the apse of a grand and most beautiful church of the twelfth century. And he was prevented from doing so, not because the idea was too horrible, but because the thing would have been too fine. It is hard, indeed, that circumstances make it unbecoming in you to inform certain folk what fools you think them.

Let these thoughts be dismissed with a sigh ; a wearied sigh. And let the more cheering reflection be suggested, that with advancing years you know better how to manage people. Your patience becomes extreme : but you break out about once a year. Yet, in fact, hardly anything surprises you, in many mortals, in the matter of the capacity of taking offence. But you make allowance, and are not put about. You know what to expect : and you are not

irritated greatly even by the most remarkable manifestations of unreasonableness and ill-temper. I have remarked that only time brings a man to this position of forbearance : a man, I mean, whose circumstances make him wholly independent of the ill-tempered and unreasonable people : to whom they can do neither good nor harm : and who, unless from sympathy with human weakness, can quite easily afford, when small beings take the pet, to let them keep it till they grow tired of it. Many years of dealing with many fellow-creatures have taught old folk to expect a percentage of pettedness, vanity, and perversity, in those with whom they have to deal. If you take up a piece of lead, and find it heavy, you don't get angry with it. You don't say, with bitterness, "Just the regular thing." No doubt, it is not the lead's fault that it is heavy : while it is (to a certain degree) Snarling's own fault that he is a cantankerous fool, or a spiteful mischief-maker. Still, with his constitution and his surroundings, it would have been difficult for Snarling to have turned out much better than he is. And some folk say (though it appears incredible) that he was in former years more disagreeable than he is now. On the whole, a great patience comes with growing experience : and a humility too, which makes you feel, as you look at some very idiotic doing, that it was all in yourself to have done the like, in conceivable circumstances. The fact, that they are not easily disappointed in

their neighbours, not much surprised by anything they do, is a considerable factor in the maintenance of the cheerfulness of old folk. But, even to the last, it irritates many men and women to find how difficult it is to get a message conveyed with tolerable accuracy: notably, how frequently a civil message is made an uncivil one in process of transmission. When you send word to a servant that you will be greatly obliged by such a thing being done, the *greatly obliged* rarely arrives. But, not unfrequently, *instantly*, or *this moment*, is added. I beheld that done, within the last few hours. I have known an intimation to be made in a Scotch church, to the effect that it would be a great improvement in seemliness and heartiness were the congregation to stand during Praise, conveyed in the *ipsissima verba*, "You're to stand up at the singing!" To such as know the Race, the result need scarcely be told.

There is a lesson, only learnt as we grow old, which lightens materially the burden which was borne in earlier years. It is the lesson to let go, to leave hold: to give up. It is a lesson very slowly and very hardly learnt, through a discipline which may well be called heart-breaking. I am not thinking, now, of the leaving go our hold upon those who must go before us from this world: but only of the ceasing to hold, or think we hold, in our protecting grasp, those who must go out from us, who must go away. You fancied you must keep your children always about

you : that you could not live unless you had your arm (so to speak) round them all : that they could not live unless this were so. Even when one and another must go out from under the roof, you seemed still to be keeping your hold of them : still directing what they should do. You had to learn to let go. You could not keep your hold : it was needless : they did not want you to do it. It is natural, to desire to keep in your hand all that you care for. I remember well how one who, after many years of modest means, suddenly succeeded to a large fortune, was bewildered on learning in how many various ways and places these scores of thousands were invested ; and said earnestly, "I wish I had it all tied up in a bag and put under my pillow." So would simple-minded parents keep their children under the paternal roof. Of course, it cannot be : and you must be reconciled, as you can, to your boys being far away. "I have them in every corner of this world," a worn mother said to me the other day, speaking of the boys and girls of a great household which the last few years have scattered wide : "I did not think I could have lived : but you see I am living after all." The words were said with a very sad smile. Yes, you are living, and working : but the absent are never forgotten, certainly never for a single day. It remains strange that the bright face has gone out from your door : and that going about your vocations you never can meet, in the familiar ways around, the hopeful

presence, nor hear the pleasant voice. The letters from a distant country are well, and you make much of them : but no page that ever pen travelled over can look at you like the kindly, familiar face : like the glistening eye. Still, you go out cheerfully on the day which brings the Australian or Indian mail : and you learn, gradually, that they can do without you, can stand well on their own feet now, have got out of your charge and care. You have let them go. Perhaps it was falling to a lower level when you did so. But the burden is a little lightened. You have not so much to do as you once thought you had. Possibly you never were doing so much as you vainly fancied.

One has remarked, with joy, that in the case of many worthy folk, living decent and prudent lives, there comes in the latter years in the course of things greater comfort in worldly circumstances. It is not always so, unhappily : but this seems the rule. Many young folk marry when they ought not, because they cannot afford it : and great anxiety and trouble follow. Sometimes the poor heads go under water altogether. But, by hard work, and close economy, many pass through that sickening time into better days. The time comes when they have got through their pecuniary anxieties : though, as Sir Walter said, who spoke from experience, it takes long to get the chill of poverty out of one's bones. Still, the terrible heart-sinking calculations are no longer needed. The ends

are pretty safe to meet. One likes to see old folks who feel justly entitled to things ; to little comforts and luxuries not permitted in earlier years. If one could but find a four-leaved shamrock, it should be so with all. And many good people enjoy those things none the less, and all the more freely, for the all-pervading though unexpressed sense that it cannot last long. That sense is not without its soothing. You remember how Wordsworth met a little physical misfortune : a tooth of no small importance broke away. But the great man merely said, calmly, that this would have been a more serious thing if it had happened forty years before. Such a reflection helps : in a fashion which young people cannot understand.

And a self-complacency sometimes grows. The aging man is pleased with himself : and with much simplicity sounds his own trumpet. He is permitted to do so. Young folk listen to him with apparent sympathy, whose words in like circumstances to a contemporary would be "Shut up, old fellow, and don't make a fool of yourself." Not but what, from a very early age, human beings take the measure of a boastful old foggy. I see yet, over years, an old gentleman stating with much iteration, to two school-boys of fourteen, that a certain improvement in a certain city was "all my idea : " "it would never have been done but for me : " and very much more to the same effect. This was in the course of a walk together. At length the little party came to a narrow

way where they could not walk abreast : and the boys modestly gave place to the old gentleman. He went before, and they followed after. And while still the sound was borne upon the breeze, "all my idea," and the old gentleman went on blowing his trumpet, the boys behind were winking each to the other, and by lively gestures of a disrespectful character were expressing their conviction that he was a vapouring old soul. But happily he did not see them. I did. And I beheld certain contortions of countenance and certain arrangements of the fingers which I afterwards learnt are employed by boys of a jibing nature in the presence of what they esteem as foolishness on the part of those to whom they ought to look up. Though the gestures were unfamiliar, I had no difficulty in making out that they were not designed to express veneration. My friend Smith was with me : and he stated that the whole proceedings reminded him vividly of an essay he wrote when in the Moral Philosophy Class, on *The Interpretation of Natural Signs*.



CHAPTER XVII.

LORD CAMPBELL.*



ORTH of the Tweed,—and in some places South of the Tweed, too,—it has for many years been a commonplace with those who preach Self-Help, or who discuss the phenomena and the philosophy of Getting On, to point to the career of Lord Campbell. By extraordinary industry : by rigorous self-denial : by steadfastly keeping his end in view : by great ability no doubt and great learning : all seconded by wonderful good luck ; the St. Andrews student of Divinity, the son of good old Dr. Campbell, parish minister of Cupar, who had no great connections and no powerful friends to back him ; was Solicitor-General at the age of fifty-three ; Attorney-General at fifty-four ; was raised to the

* “ Life of John, Lord Campbell, Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain : consisting of a Selection from his Autobiography, Diary, and Letters.” Edited by his Daughter, the Hon. Mrs. Hardcastle. In two volumes. London : 1881.

Bench as Lord Chief Justice of England ; and finally became Lord Chancellor of Great Britain. Nor is it enough to say he held these great places : no one can deny that he proved himself equal to the duties of each. He was a strong Attorney-General. He was one of the most eminent of Chief Justices. And though raised to the Woolsack at four-score, he was a thoroughly sufficient Chancellor.

This Biography will enlist sympathy : the reader cannot but rejoice in each step of Campbell's success. It lets us in, with remarkable frankness : and the more we see of Campbell, the better we like him. It is a story of toil and self-denial, of luck and disappointment : the young barrister sometimes "nearly broken-hearted," convinced that he has "no talents for this profession ;" yet in a little plucking up heart again, and writing that his "patience and perseverance are unconquerable." When prosperity came, wonderfully soon, and very steadily, he enjoyed it simply and showed he did, as a more secretive man would not have done. Others are not so outspoken. That is their way ; and by all means let them take it. But Campbell's frankness enlists us on his side. And there is really nothing to conceal : all is pleasing and lovable. We share the joy of the aged minister of Cupar, sadly mortified when John turned away from the ministry of the Scotch Church, and slow to believe that his son was really rising at the English Bar, yet at last assured of his growing eminence. It was a

great fact, and unmistakable, when Dr. Campbell's two sons drove him through Cupar streets, crowded on a market-day, in a carriage and four, amid a popular ovation. You may smile at Campbell's unsophisticated enjoyment of such things; but you are drawn to the right-hearted and sweet-natured man. It is no wonder that, in youth and in age, he was, in his daughter's words, "beloved by all who belonged to him."

Let us say at once of the daughter who has prepared this Biography, "my beloved child and best of friends, Mary," that she has done her work admirably well. The two volumes consist exclusively of her father's words. The materials from which she had to draw were an Autobiography, a Diary, and a series of letters to his father and his brother. Whoever reads these letters without being touched must have either a wrong head or a bad heart. Mrs. Hardcastle has given the world an abiding memorial of the father whose life she brightened; showing him truthfully, though doubtless at his best. And this is her sufficient reward.

She has set her father right with all readers whose judgment she would value. And it was well this should be done. For it is to be confessed, and it is a most singular instance of the capricious nature of public opinion, that Lord Campbell's merits met but a grudging recognition through the greater part of his career. Here is a man of blameless life, of great

ability and industry, of perfect truth and honour, of much kindness and goodness of heart: yet he was grudgingly spoken of by many, and bitterly abused by two or three, of whom Miss Martineau is a specially spiteful specimen. We do not here allude to her malignant misrepresentations of fact in the matter of Campbell's elevation to the Chief-Justiceship. Of that matter we shall speak in its proper place. We speak of her general tone of virulent depreciation. Nor do we meanwhile refer to Brougham, by necessity of his nature hating every man who met any success or who did anything well; and absolutely unrestrained by truth either in puffing himself or in running down any other. Neither have we in our mind the briefless barrister, possibly stopped in some foolish speech, and vilifying the Chief Justice anonymously in a newspaper. Apart from all personal offence, it is quite certain that Lord Campbell exerted a real power of provocation upon some people. It made them angry, to think of him and his success and his self-complacency. And it fell to Campbell to be spoken and written of by several men who could not think of any one placed as he was unless with a latent comparison with themselves: a comparison which was irritative. He was well-behaved; which is an injury to some, and would be felt as a rebuke by certain ex-Chancellors. He was competently rich, and paid his bills: a great offence to some departed lawyers of high position. Wealth and respectability,

in another, are doubtless a provocation to some human beings. Then, it is to be admitted, there was a certain tendency when on the Bench to what may be called Clap-trap: as in *Thank God, we have no Inquisition in England*. There were jokes: as when the Chief Justice remarked of some poor fellows drowned by the bursting of one of Barclay and Perkins' vats, that they "floated on their watery bier." And it was Lord Campbell all over, to start up in church at an assize service when the clergyman began to read the prayer for Parliament, and interrupt him with the assurance that Parliament was not sitting, the Chief Justice himself having been one of the Commissioners who prorogued it the evening before. Such things were provocative to some folk. The writer was present when Lord Campbell was asked whether the last-named proceeding did not amount to *brawling in church*. With the greatest good-nature he replied that probably it had better not have been done, but that he really could not help correcting a manifest blunder. Beyond all question, it had better not have been done. We have all witnessed mistakes in public worship: and the rule is that they be ignored at the time and forgotten ever after. But we are mistaken, if such as read these volumes will be much disposed to look for the spots on the sun. Surely any little failings or weaknesses were balanced, a thousand times over, by noble and most lovable qualities. One cannot even remember them, think-

ing of such a character and career : seeing the true man shown to us so fully and simply : the shrewd Scotchman keeping an unsophisticated heart to the last : thinking his wife and children paragons, and his father and brother, and beloved in return as few have been : rejoicing, when made Chief Justice of England, that now he could provide for the faithful clerk who came as a lad to the poor young barrister and stayed with him through disappointment and success, and shared his rise : fairly and bravely earning all his great elevation : waiting for it long and patiently : and enjoying it heartily when it came at last.

There is no more striking instance of the capricious fashion in which things befall, than the way in which the nickname of *Plain John* stuck to Lord Campbell. It seems to have soothed Brougham some little under his own dismal failure and isolation, to call Campbell *Plain John*, and *Jack Campbell* ; as also to call Macaulay *Tom*. If it please any one to behold the littleness of the great, let him turn to the published correspondence of Mr. Macvey Napier. The bitterest enemy Brougham ever had (and he made many) never could have shown him up as he has there exhibited himself. Macaulay would not stand it : "That man is possessed by the Devil,"—"That man *is* the Devil," was his outspoken estimate. Miss Martineau's venomous little hit at Lord Campbell and his wife is worth recalling :—

In my earlier days Lord Campbell was "Plain John Campbell:" but plain John was wonderfully like the present lord: facetious, in and out of place, politic, flattering to an insulting degree, and prone to moralising in so trite a way as to be almost as insulting. He was full of knowledge, and might have been inexhaustibly entertaining if he could have forgotten his prudence and been natural. When his wife, Lady Stratheden, was present, there was some explanation both of the worldly prudence and the behaviour to ladies,—as if they were spoiled children,—which plain John supposed would please them.*

"The public heard less, and his own friends heard less, in the latter part of his life about his plainness and humility, and the paternal manse: but he had exhibited these things so often in his electioneering speeches and his official addresses that he was best known as plain John Campbell to the last."†

The misrepresentation of words once said by Lord Campbell is remarkable, and persistent. Lord Campbell never talked of his plainness and humility, in the sense in which Miss Martineau continually uses the phrase. He was the last man to do so. "Born in the manse, we have each the patent of Nobility;" were his words at a gathering of Sons of the Scotch Clergy in London, which he and Sir David Wilkie attended. The circumstances were the simplest possible. He had sat in Parliament as member for Edinburgh for several years, being Attorney-General.

* "Autobiography," vol. i. p. 338.

† "Biographical Sketches," p. 246. Miss Martineau's account of Lord Campbell in this volume is a tissue of ill-set misrepresentation.

A change of Ministry came : he went out of office ; and there was a General Election. Addressing his constituents, he said that when last he appeared before them he had held the place of His Majesty's Attorney-General, and was official Head of the English Bar : Now, he was stripped of that, and appeared before them as plain John Campbell. A more natural and innocent speech, one would say, could hardly be. And one would say there must have been few loop-holes of attack, when this was made so much of and so persistently harped upon.

Whoever knew Lord Campbell knew well that his references to his father's house and his student days were not made in that peculiar humbleness which we associate with the character of Uriah Heep. The two brothers, George and John, retrieved the worldly fortunes of the family. But the father, Doctor Campbell of Cupar, though his living was but £80 a year, was of good descent : his circumstances soon grew adequate to his position ; and the dignity of the old clergyman's look and manner is remembered yet. The Chancellor came of gentle blood, through each parent. It is now made matter of complaint by some critics that he was unduly proud of his descent. Possibly it is wrong to be proud of gentle blood, or of anything else. But in telling the story of one's birth, it seems natural to state facts. And the accusations of over-pride and of over-humility cannot both be true.

If we knew as much about any Chancellor, or any

tutor who becomes a Bishop, or any mortal who wins one of the great prizes of life, as we know about Lord Campbell, we should, doubtless, feel the like interest in him. But, in fact, we are not commonly permitted to get behind the scenes with the winners in the lottery of life, as we are permitted here. And, not to all readers, but assuredly to some, there is about Lord Campbell a singular combination of circumstances of special interest, hardly ever combined. Homely Fife: dear and sacred St. Andrews, University and Links, gray ruins and green ivy and broad sea, and remembrances innumerable, grave and gay, national, and extremely individual: likewise the sternly Tory Church of Scotland, republican by constitution, High-Church (till these last years) by practice if ever High-Churchism were; believing in the House of Peers, likewise in the goodness of George IV. and the wisdom of William IV.; these things go kindly together, and have gone together for ages. But these things in combination with Westminster Hall and the Courts of Guildhall, with the Temple and Lincoln's Inn, with the drawing of Pleadings and the fees inscribed on the back of Briefs, with the bullying of Ellenborough and the ever-ready tears of Eldon, with the Procession at the beginning of Term and the Taking of Silk: how many are there in each generation who are equally familiar with the Scotch Kirk and the English Law? Is there more than one member of an Inn of Court who is in the orders of

the Northern Ecclesiastical Establishment? And if there were more, how would they like it? What would they think, in the latter years, of the enthusiastic choice of youth? How many students of Divinity, "having delivered all their discourses," have passed from the quaint quadrangle of the College of the Blessed Mary, with its beautiful hawthorn-tree planted by another Mary, a hapless Queen whose career was anything but blessed,—to the highest place on the Judgment-seat of the Common Law, to the crowning glory of the Woolsack at last? Not without a sympathetic smile, not without something like a tear, can some who have watched successive generations of Divinity students, with the profound sympathy that comes of having been such themselves, find the Attorney-General recording that he never was so frightened as he was when he first made an important speech in the House of Commons, since the day when he had to conduct public prayer (according to his own device) in the Hall of St. Mary's College at St. Andrews: on which memorable occasion he heard the clock strike the awful hour of eight, and "his heart died within him." And though the "Lives of the Chancellors" proved a most popular work, and Sir John Campbell's "Speeches" secured (in spite of Brougham's protest) a kindly notice in the *Edinburgh Review*, it would be hardly less interesting to many to consider the theological thought and style of the first sermon which "gained no small

credit when read aloud before the Professors and Students," being from the text "All living things wait upon Thee, and Thou providest food for them in due season." One sentence in this sermon was supplied by a friend: "Every leaf bears insects which quaff the delicious juices spontaneously supplied for their use, and spend their days in luxurious idleness." And a reflection, entirely original, which was "much applauded" by the Professor of those days, though we somehow doubt whether it would meet so favourable a reception now, was that "we ought to be thankful that man is not, as he might have been, fed like an oyster, unconscious of his nutrition," but is made capable of enjoying his dinner. One thing is certain: that in the eyes of a brother Scot, the Lord Chancellor, presiding in the House of Lords in his full-bottomed wig and his robes, never in any degree lost something of the look of a St. Andrews Student of Divinity. He was notably Scotch, and Scotch Church, to the last. It is vain for a Scotchman to think to conceal his nationality from another Scotchman. "Ou aye," said a humble mechanic to a lady who asked of him if the new minister did not speak very prettily: "Ou aye; ye wad think at the first that he cam' frae Oxford or Cambridge. But he hasna gaen on long, till ye see he comes frae Paisley."

John Campbell was born at Cupar on September 15, 1779. Cupar is the county town of the important shire of Fife; not uncommonly called *The Kingdom*

of Fife. As with other Scotch names, the pronunciation of the name of Cupar puzzled London folk. Campbell tells us that in London some called it *Cupper*, and some *Kew-par*. In fact, it is called *Cooper*. There were two brothers, of whom John was the younger : and five sisters. Doctor Campbell succeeded, after John's birth, to the larger of the two livings of the parish : Cupar being (as many know) what in Scotland is called a *Collegiate Charge* : which means a parish church with two Incumbents, who in most cases quarrel. Cupar is eight miles distant from St. Andrews : Here is one of John Campbell's earliest recollections :

"I remember my extreme delight when as a child I first visited the City of St. Andrews, and, being led down the 'Butts Wynd' to the 'Scores,' the ocean in a storm was pointed out to me."

In November 1790, at the age of eleven, John (his brother George came likewise) was entered as a student of the University of St. Andrews. The early age at which students of that period came to the University in Scotland has been many times explained. The Professors did the work of school-masters. The average age of entrants at the Scotch Universities is now eighteen. The brothers had each a Bursary, or Scholarship : one was £20 a year, the other £10. A faithful servant, who died in the family after forty years in it, took care of the little boys. The Professors of St. Andrews in that day were for

the most part men of eminence : though probably less so than their successors at the present hour. Then, as now, the number of students was comparatively small. This session,* there are fewer than two hundred. For four centuries the number has hardly varied. Great good follows in divers ways : notably, in the greater attention which a Professor can devote to the training of individual students than is possible elsewhere. Not but that there is something inspiring, both to student and Professor, in the crowded lecture-rooms of Glasgow : though how any Professor, able and genial as he may be, can teach seven hundred young men Latin daily is hard to discover. The physical advantages of the lesser University City are manifold. On many calm winter days, when a worse than London fog dulls the energies of Glasgow men, the happier students of St. Andrews live in the brightest sunshine, under a sky of Italian blue. And to some human beings it is a feature in their life to abide within sight and sound of the sea. "Grand place, St. Andrews," said Carlyle to the writer on an afternoon in last May : "you have the essence of all the antiquity of Scotland, in good and clean condition."

In their second year, the two Campbells had rooms in St. Salvator's College : the fashion of residence within the College walls is now unhappily unknown in Scotland. It survived at St. Andrews longest.

* 1880-1.

The brothers dined at an ordinary where an abundant dinner was provided at sixpence a-head. Fish, meat, and poultry in those days cost next to nothing. The students lived a temperate life, diversified by an occasional *Booze* : a harmless festival which "has a favourable tendency to excite the faculties, to warm the affections, to improve the manners, and to form the character of youth." In these latter days, such a festival bears the classic title of a *Gaudeamus*. The Chief Justice, student-like, records with manifest enjoyment the tricks occasionally played on Professors : which must endure till there are no more Universities. And he tells for himself, what has been many times told of him, how the *Αἶψα ἀπορρίψιν* on the wall of the University Library made a deep impression on him when first seen. "I have always since *done my best*, and I have never been accused, or long accused myself, of idleness or apathy."

In the spring of 1793 the children at Cupar Manse lost their mother :

I remember my brother and myself being sent for from St. Andrews to see her, and my anguish at beholding her altered looks, though I was not fully aware of her danger. In taking leave when we were about to return to St. Andrews, she must have known, though we did not, that she was to see us no more. We were made to kneel at her bedside. She kissed and blessed us : and the last words I ever heard her pronounce now vibrate on my ear : "Farewell ! and oh ! be good."

She was an inestimable woman, and she was never forgotten by her children. Few will read, unaffected,

the warm tribute to her virtues which the world-worn lawyer writes concerning the mother the little boy lost.

In due time, John Campbell proceeded to St. Mary's College, to study for the Church, being only sixteen. He had been a puny lad, and had gone by the derisive sobriquet of *Joannes Gigas*, *Jack the Giant*: but he now suddenly shot up to "the respectable height of five feet ten inches." Here Chalmers was a fellow-student: but gave no promise whatever of his future distinction. Campbell prosecuted his theological studies with diligence, and had hope of a presentation to the bleak parish of Cameron, a few miles south of St. Andrews. But that was not to be.

In 1798, a wealthy London merchant, Webster by name, applied to certain St. Andrews Professors for a tutor to his son: and John Campbell was appointed. After a tender parting from his father and sisters, and a few days at Edinburgh with his brother George, who was now studying medicine there, he travelled from Edinburgh to London by coach in three days and two nights. Much fear existed as to the effect upon the brain of the traveller of such excessive speed. The four hundred miles are now traversed in nine hours: and the brain of such as make the journey is neither better nor worse. York Minster came up to all he had heard of the glories of St. Andrews Cathedral before the days of Knox. The noise of London was stunning. The family to which

he went lived at Clapham, and he was kindly treated : but the work was not congenial. He went to the theatre, and was duly impressed by Mrs. Siddons and John Kemble : but "the most memorable day of his life" was that on which he first went to the House of Commons. There was a great debate upon Slavery. And after hearing Wilberforce, Fox, and Pitt, he felt that he "could 'no longer have been satisfied with being Moderator of the General Assembly." Yet application was made for the rural parish of Legerwood, the living of which he would soon be qualified to hold. The application failed. Campbell wrote to his father :

My opinion of myself becomes lower and lower every day. I have no longer the most distant hope of ever composing with elegance, or of making any figure in the literary world. I can only wish for some retreat where I might employ myself in writing sermons and fattening pigs, where I might live and die unknown.

And to his brother :

My ambition now is to find some secure retreat, where forgetting and forgotten I may spend the *curriculum vite celo datum* in gloomy peace and desperate contentment. I have some thoughts of setting out in search of such a retreat, "where wild Oswego spreads her swamps around : " but if you can procure me a living in the Kirk of Scotland, you will save me the trouble of crossing the Atlantic.

These feelings were transient : and gradually John begins to write to his father as to giving up the Church for the Law. It was a great grief to the

good old clergyman : as in another case the reversal of the process was to another, equally good and kind :

Some people could be extremely happy with a country kirk in Scotland. I am no longer of the number,—not from any dislike to obscurity, but from a horror of inaction. When I am employed, I am happy. When I am idle, I am miserable. Now, I never exert myself without absolute necessity, and I find no pleasure in feeding pigs or in shelling peas. As a country minister, therefore, I should be the most miserable of human beings, and not improbably should at last become completely deranged. As a reporter, and afterwards as a lawyer, I shall be obliged to be busy every hour of the day, and shall have no time to indulge in gloomy and distressing reflections. In Scotland I should be nearly cut off from the streams of Helicon : in London I have only to kneel down and drink my fill. I shall pass my life in the centre of the republic of letters, and by unwearied assiduity may perhaps obtain some of its honours.

The die was cast. The father reluctantly consented. Robert Spankie, a clever St. Andrews student, afterwards a serjeant-at-law and M.P., was editor of the *Morning Chronicle* : and offered Campbell an engagement which would be compatible with the study of the Law. Campbell began to attend the Courts : and having heard some great lawyers speak, he thought (as others have done) that it need not be very difficult to do as well, at least. Still the hopeful lad hesitates. He writes to his father (wanting some months of twenty-one) :

When I am in bad spirits, and sitting alone in my gloomy garret, I contemplate with pleasure the idea of being licensed and procuring a settlement in the Church. I spurn it when I

hear the eloquent addresses of Law, of Gibbs, of Erskine ; and, while my heart burns within me, a secret voice assures me that if I make the attempt, I shall be as great as they.

To his sister, a few weeks later :

Although I am friendless at present, I am not sure that it ought to be assumed that I shall be without friends six years hence. During that long period surely some opportunity will occur of forming desirable connections, and every opportunity I shall sedulously improve. In about six years after I am called to the Bar, I expect to have distinguished myself so much as to be in possession of a silk gown and a seat in Parliament. I shall not have been long in the House of Commons before I interest the Minister in my favour and am made Solicitor-General. The steps then, though high, are easy : and after being a short time Attorney-General and Master of the Rolls, I shall get the seals, with the title of Earl Auld-Kirk-Yaird. I am sorry that this last sentence has escaped me, as it is the only one that did not come from the bottom of my heart.

He visited Cupar in the summer of 1800 ; and was entered of Lincoln's Inn on November 3 in that year. He lived by his newspaper work : reporting parliamentary reports excellently though not writing shorthand : acting as theatrical critic : and contributing comic paragraphs which anticipated "Punch" and the jokes of the Chief Justice. He had a lodging which cost him £18 a year. Yet in a little he sent his sisters a five-pound note for pocket-money : which never arrived. No mortal man worked harder, or more steadily. In 1802, he allowed himself a first little tour on the Continent : the first French hotel he saw was "like St. Salvator's College, St. Andrews."

He saw a good deal of a curious phase of London life among newspaper men. He beheld Porson drunk, repeating Milton magnificently with tears, then picked up in the kennel. He began to keep his terms, by dining in Lincoln's Inn Hall; where a certain Sugden introduced himself by asking what Campbell "thought of the *scintilla juris*?" The strong heart now and then failed him: and he asks his father whether he might not get the appointment of Beadle of Cupar church. His brother George in due time went to India, and was speedily a prosperous man and always the kindest of brothers. His visits to Scotland were rare: and he felt what others have felt when he returned from them. In 1803, now twenty-four, he writes to his father:

The bustle of departure and hurry of travelling had prevented me from feeling in its full bitterness the pain of separation: but when I reached my home, saw no eye to welcome me, reflected that for hundreds of miles round there was no human being that cared for me, and remembered that in one corner there was a family who perhaps at that moment were weeping my absence, but from whom I was cut off, as it were, for ever,—then,—then—

Oh, write to me soon and say something to comfort me. I never was so cast down as now.

He now became a pupil of Tidd, the great Special Pleader: having first taken his degree of M.A. at St. Andrews. The pupils generally were thoroughly idle, as law students often are; but Campbell worked with a will. His brother had provided the hundred a year which was Tidd's fee. Among the pupils then in

Tidd's chambers together were Denman, afterwards Chief Justice of England; and Copley, Pepys, and Campbell, each to be Lord Chancellor. Campbell was terribly afraid he should be known for a newspaper man. The *Morning Chronicle* was taken in, and his own papers sometimes discussed. He felt himself, among the others, to be "an adventurer," creeping in some other way. When his pupilship with Tidd was ended, Tidd engaged him, at a hundred a year, to remain as head of the chambers: and now Campbell took chambers of his own, in Inner Temple Lane. It was the good brother in India through whose generosity all increase of comforts came. Here he became quite domestic: he writes to his father in September 1804:

I intend to dine frequently here at home, and to lay in a piece of cheese, to stock my cellar with ale and porter, and, as the citizens say, to study *comfort* a little more than I have hitherto done.

Next year he left the *Chronicle*, judging himself able to do without it: and in another year he was called to the Bar. It is pleasant to read a letter from Tidd to another Scotch Chancellor, just elevated,—Lord Erskine,—introducing two future Chancellors, Pepys and Campbell, "both young men of very considerable legal abilities, most unremitting application, and of unexceptionable principles." By this time David Wilkie, his aunt's step-son, had come to London, and was rising fast. The great day of

Campbell's Call was November 15, 1806. He was twenty-seven. It was a great step, and attended with much expense, borne by George. And Campbell set up a clerk: a boy of nine years old.

He went the Home Circuit: and he knew the sickness of heart which many have known. A memorable event was a visit of good Doctor Campbell to Inner Temple Lane. Though Campbell was often in deep despondency, he need not have been. In four years from his call, he was making £1000 a year. When he was thirty-seven, he was making £3000 a year. He had changed the ragged boy of nine for a faithful clerk, named Cooper (or as he rendered it to his father, *Cupar*); whose name seemed ominous, and who abode with him to the end. Now he could write to his father hopefully:

Should I have been happier, vegetating as a country parson with a wife and children and £150 a year,—a dinner at the laird's the most splendid event in my life, and a ride to the market town on Presbytery day the external limit of my travels? No disappointment, disgust, or despondency, however deep, has ever made me sigh for the Kirk. You know I honour it, and reverence its Ministers. But I never could have been useful, respectable, or happy, as one of the number.

By and by he changed to the Oxford Circuit, on which there was a better opening. Here he once walked thirty miles, without fatigue: he had a grand physical constitution, proved by his long life of active labour. And he moved his chambers to the pleasant locality of Paper Buildings. Good old Doctor

Campbell was slow to credit his son's rise. When he was making £2000 a year, the Doctor wrote, "I yet fondly hope to see the day when Jack shall be independent, employed, and respected." And the Cupar folk were slower than their minister. There is just a shade of bitterness in a letter in which Campbell says, "I don't despair of meeting with much civility and attention from my townsmen of Cupar, which I shall not fail to do, when they know that their assistance can no longer be of use to me." When Campbell had risen high, and the Cupar magistrates had to employ Counsel in some Parliamentary business, they took pains to mortify the old minister by employing any one but his son. Possibly the remembrance of such things was in the mind of the Chief Justice of England, when (so the story is told, true or not) some Cupar folk applied to him for a gift of the "Lives of the Lord Chancellors" for the Public Library; and received a curt note to the effect that the work might be had of any bookseller. An aged lady of the neighbourhood, many years ago, said to the writer, relating the history of the Campbell family, "They meant John for the Church, but he went to London, *and got on very well.*" No doubt he had. For at that moment he was Chief Justice.

In the year 1813, having found that incapacity to dance was a social hindrance, Campbell set himself to acquire that accomplishment. And, characteristically, he received instruction with such earnestness

and gravity, that it was supposed he designed to become a dancing-master: supposed, that is, by his teacher and fellow-disciples, to whom he was known by an assumed name, or as *the gentleman*. And now he began to think of marriage: though fearing he should not be able to marry till he should be too old. It is amusing to find his father exhorting him to steady and good behaviour, as though he were a thoughtless lad. His letters home are at this period extremely minute and interesting: and in one of them he remarks that if they fall into the hands of his brethren at the Bar, they would prove "the importance of a man to himself and his father." In the autumn of 1814, he allowed himself a fortnight's holiday at Cupar: to his brother he writes:

As I came in sight of Eden Bridge, I recognised the venerable figure of our father. You may be sure it was not long before I sprung from the coach-box into his arms. He looks, thank God, fresh and hearty. He is a little stiff, and can't stoop very well; but he can walk five or six miles with the utmost facility. He says he is now sixty-seven,—that is to say, in his sixty-eighth year, his birthday being in June.

On his return to the Temple, he writes to his father:

The fortnight I spent with you I consider as that in which I enjoyed the most happiness, and shall look back upon with the most satisfaction, of any period of my life.

In 1816, Campbell could afford himself a horse, which cost sixty guineas. And in that year (though

he did not let his father know) he had the only severe illness of his life. For a time, he thought it would be fatal :

The disappointment of all my ambitious projects cost me much less than I should have expected. I was chiefly distressed in anticipating how the news would be received by you, and still more, I think, the shock to be sustained by our poor father. When at the worst, I received a letter from him, describing his unexampled happiness in his children. A very unpleasant thing was going into Court to be gazed at by my brother circuiters. I never mentioned to any of them what was the matter with me, but from my looks they were exceedingly *sanguine*.

On the first Sunday in August 1817, he follows in thought the Communion Service in Cupar church :

From hour to hour I followed the service through its various stages till I thought you must have concluded your thanksgiving service in the evening. I wish I could assist at your forty-seventh Sacrament. Of all the religious ceremonies I have seen or read of, I find nothing so impressive and truly grand as the administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to the forms of the Church of Scotland.

Now the good brother George comes back from India, after eighteen years there, having made a competent fortune. He bought a pretty property within two miles of his father's house, and built a handsome house on it. Here Sir George Campbell lived for thirty years as a country gentleman : having become an Elder of the Kirk. It was in 1818 that the two brothers took their father, three sisters, and some other near relatives, a tour through the most

beautiful parts of the Highlands, and were hospitably entertained by a great Campbell, Lord Breadalbane, at Taymouth.

When we returned home, it was market day at Cupar, and I cannot forget my father's exultation as he was driven with four horses through the crowded streets with his sons beside him in what he considered "a grand ovation."

Things in this world so seldom occur dramatically, that the following incident should be preserved.

I yesterday conducted a prosecution (on the circuit, in Salop) for a robbery in the house of Robert Walker, of High Ercall, farmer. Several of his farming servants were examined who, from their superior appearance as well as their dialect, easily discovered themselves to be Scotchmen. The prosecutor sat behind me, and as the judge was summing up I turned round to him and said, "Mr. Walker, you seem to have got all your ploughmen from Scotland."

W. "I'm from Skoatlan' mysel'."

C. "Indeed, from what part?"

W. "From Fife, near Cupar."

C. "You are not a son of Mr. Walker of Carslogie?"

W. "Troth am I."

C. "Give me your hand."

W. "How do you come to ken anything aboot me?"

C. "I am the son of Dr. Cawmel of Cupar."

W. "Lord Almighty! wha would ha' thought that?"

We had a very cordial talk about our Fife friends.

The rising barrister, with approval of the Chief Justice Tenterden, applied to the Chancellor for "silk:" that is, the rank of King's Counsel. But Eldon, who had placed several scandalously incapable men on the Bench, because they were Tories, refused

the application of the Whig and Scotchman. The disappointment was only for a little while. A greater disappointment, also temporary, was when Campbell was refused by Miss Scarlett, daughter of the greatest advocate of that day, afterwards Attorney-General, and Chief Baron by the title of Lord Abinger. It was a terrible blow. But the lady thought better of it, and finally accepted Campbell : proving an inestimable partner through forty years of married life, and sharing all her husband's honours up to the highest. When she accepted his son, old Doctor Campbell wrote her a letter, which is preserved, and which leaves us the pleasantest impression of a warm-hearted and courtly old gentleman. Scotchman-like, he is delighted to know that she is "descended from our clan." Her mother was a Campbell. The marriage was on September 8, 1821. The dignitaries of the law were the first visitors of the young couple in their own house, splendid with the Campbell liveries. Earliest of all were Brougham and Denham.

A year after their marriage, Campbell and his wife visited Scotland, and spent some happy days with the Doctor at Cupar. But Campbell shakes one's confidence in his taste and judgment by the awful statement that Ayr was "the ugliest place I ever entered." It is a beautiful town, beautifully situated on the seashore, with a grand view of Arran. Assuredly it beats Cupar by degrees innumerable. But a certain perversity of opinion is by common consent "Fifish."

Not much more of his son's rise was to gladden Dr. Campbell's heart. John's name was being mentioned in connection with the Solicitor-Generalship: but that was all. The last letter to his father is dated November 16, 1824: and the old man died on November 24, having been minister of Cupar for fifty-one years. But the last shade of disappointment that John would not be a Scotch minister had gone long before. His children placed a marble tablet in the church to his memory. The inscription is simple and touching: and it bears that his children placed it there. Within five years of Campbell's death the writer was looking at the tablet, the beadle standing by. "Well," was the remark, "the good Doctor's children got on well." The beadle gazed blankly. "Don't you know that his son John rose to be Head of the English Law, to be what is called Lord Chancellor?" "Never heard of it," was the beadle's reply.

"I see, in my mind's-eye," says Ellesmere in "Friends in Council," "a statue of Dunsford erected in Tollerporcorum:" Dunsford being supposed to have been born there, and the people of Tollerporcorum being proud of him. Ellesmere did not know Cupar-Fife.

The course was plain now. The desired Silk came, and Campbell frankly enjoyed it. The first trial of the barrister, idleness, was gone. The second had come, over-work. He began to be offered puisne judge-

ships. He might have been Mr. Justice Campbell twenty years before he sat on the English Bench. But he could and would wait for higher things. He was elected member for Stafford, in the way in which men became members for Stafford, as a moderate Liberal. Of course his father had been a Tory. An intelligent elector declared, in a speech, that Campbell would serve the constituency *with fidelity and truism*. The good man's meaning was plain. Campbell's letters to his brother at this period give an interesting view of the events accompanying the Reform Bill. But these belong to history. In November 1832, the long anticipated Solicitor-Generalship came. The Attorney-General was a very weak one, and was soon got rid of: Campbell attaining that office in February 1834. "The best thing in the Law," the writer has heard a Chief Justice say to Campbell, when Lord Chancellor. "Except the Chancellorship," was the Chancellor's reply. "No, not excepting the Chancellorship." And the old judge smiled benignantly: as one who had been both.

As Solicitor, Campbell had sat for Dudley. Vacating his seat, he was now rejected: and had an uncomfortable three months till elected for Edinburgh by an immense majority. Lord Chancellor Brougham met him with much congratulation; and even Lord Lyndhurst "could not in his heart be sorry." The Master of the Rolls died in 1834, and Campbell, as Attorney,

had a claim : but Pepys, Solicitor, was an Equity lawyer, and was preferred by Brougham. The Whig Ministry held on, getting rid (all the world knows how and why) of Brougham, and the Great Seal being put in Commission. In 1836 the feeble Pepys was made Chancellor by Melbourne, now Prime Minister ; and Bickersteth Master of the Rolls. One of these offices was Campbell's by right : but he could not be spared from the Commons, and had to remain Attorney, but soothed by a peerage to his wife. She became Baroness Stratheden of Cupar. The little river Eden runs by Cupar : and the *country-side* is Stratheden. An unsuccessful attempt was made to divide the duties of the Chancellor, leaving Pepys to preside permanently in the Court of Chancery, and making Campbell a Judge of Appeal, removable with the Administration : and Campbell had to be content to hold the office of Attorney-General longer than any other man but one. It was hard, that he was so good an Attorney, that he could not be spared. If several degrees inferior, he would have been kicked upstairs. The case of Norton *v.* Melbourne, in which Campbell won laurels against Follett, is best forgot. Campbell frankly tells us that Melbourne was quite capable of that of which he was accused : though in this case unjustly. Two of his daughters spent the summer of 1836 with his brother at St. Andrews, and went to see Cupar pulpit : and in that year, Mr. Attorney, now quite beyond the patronage of Cupar Town Council,

was entertained at dinner there by all the royal Burghs of the county, which are many.

They all formed a grand procession, and conducted me in triumph over the bridge across the Eden, past the house where I was born, on to the Cross, and so I was placed under a canopy in the Town Hall. But when the addresses began, I was so affected that I could only sob violently. The memory of my father came across me, and I thought with myself what his sensations would have been if he could have witnessed this scene. However, all was ascribed to "goodness of heart," and no eloquence could have more ingratiated me with my fellow-townsmen.

After all, Lord Campbell ought to have given the "Lives of the Chancellors" to the Cupar Library. Had we been in his place, we should have given at least two copies.

In March 1838, his chambers in Paper Buildings were burnt. The loss, to many, was terrible. The Attorney lamented most a great collection of letters from his father and brother. The carelessness of Maule, Senior Wrangler and afterwards Judge, caused this great trouble; and earned for him the title, among young Templars, of the Fire-King.

The Melbourne Ministry held on, with ever-diminishing character, and the day of its dissolution loomed in view. A General Election came on in the summer of 1841: and whenever it was resolved upon, Lord John Russell and Lord Melbourne desired to make provision for the Attorney-General to whom they owed so much. They spontaneously offered

him the Irish Chancellorship as successor to Lord Plunket. Campbell did not like the arrangement ; but it was the best that was open. It indeed did no more than provide a dignified retirement from the labours of the Bar : for it was certain that Campbell would hold the office for so short a time, that by his own proposal he was appointed without claim to the usual pension of £4000 a year on retirement. Now, at length, the St. Andrews student became a peer. His title was Baron Campbell of St. Andrews. Lord Plunket objected, at the last, to resign, on the ground that he would be compromised in public opinion if he helped to get Lord Campbell a retiring salary after a few weeks' or months' service. The difficulty was removed. Plunket resigned : but at his last appearance in Court he stated that resignation was forced upon him : that he disapproved Campbell's appointment, and thought the office should be filled by a member of the Irish Bar. All Plunket in fact did, was to resign six weeks sooner than he must have resigned, in any case, an office to which his failing strength was unequal. And his obligations to the Government were great. Not only had he himself been Chancellor of Ireland, but he had got his son made a Bishop, he having himself been the son of a Dissenting minister. So incompetent was Plunket's son to hold the Episcopal office, that he could not write his own charge. He got his chaplain to write it. And the chaplain, following his master's

example, copied a charge of Archbishop Sumner of Canterbury. Bishop and chaplain were at once found out.

Lord Campbell at once entered upon his duty at Dublin, Plunket and he becoming quite friendly. The result of the General Election was soon apparent. And Campbell, who had made a most favourable impression upon the Irish, O'Connell included, returned to his house in New Street, Spring Gardens, a pensionless peer, his practice at the Bar, which had been immense, at an end. Nine long years had to pass before his elevation to the English Bench. He served the country diligently in the judicial business of the Privy Council and the House of Peers. In 1842 he took possession of Stratheden House: and, incapable of idleness, he set himself to the composition of his "Lives of the Chancellors." The first series was published at the end of 1845, and met with immediate success. The subject was interesting, and it suited the author: and Campbell's treatment of it met all but universal praise. There was one exception. Brougham wrote in a newspaper a violent attack on Campbell rather than on his work, calling him Plain John, and his Lives "ponderous trifles." Next day he made some inquiry of Campbell concerning the work, stating that he had not yet been able to look at it. Campbell laughed in his face without giving him any answer. In 1846 Campbell bought the estate of Hartrigge, in Roxburghshire, in a beautiful country,

near the junction of the Jed and the Teviot. Here he built a handsome house, "hoping that there the Lords Stratheden and Campbell might long be settled." The house and its furniture cost near £10,000. When the Whig Government came into power in 1846, Lord Campbell had a seat in the Cabinet as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. The Irish Chancellorship was given to an Irishman. In 1847, to his great joy, his eldest son was elected member for Cambridge. The second and third series of the "Chancellors" were as popular as the first: Brougham kindly explaining that people must make up their sets.

The years were going on; and in 1849 Lord Campbell was in his seventieth year. Wilde had been made Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, to which as Attorney-General he had a recognised claim: but a higher place was coming to Campbell. In the summer of 1849, Lord Denman had a paralytic attack: and Lord Chancellor Cottenham was very ill: so that Lyndhurst said to Campbell, "Well, you will have your choice to be a Chancellor or a Chief Justice." On October 11, 1849, Lord John Russell wrote to Lord Campbell that Lord Denman could not be expected to fulfil his duties on the Bench ever again; and offering, with the Chancellor's approval, the great place of Chief Justice of England. It had come at last: though late. Campbell, who did not feel exhilarated at first, liked the prospect

more and more on longer thought: liked it better than the Chancellorship. He took forthwith to getting up the newest fashions of Westminster Hall, from which he had been so long withdrawn; began to read that awful work known to law students as "Co. Litt." Never did Templars burst into heartier applause than when, in a Haymarket play, Buckstone, being asked to bring a soporific for a nervous patient, returned with that famous treatise. Baron Rolfe, afterwards to be Chancellor as Lord Cranworth, and long Solicitor under him, coached the new Chief Justice. But difficulties arose. Denman, though quite unfit for duty, proposed to hold on, to keep Campbell out. Denman's mind must have been grievously weakened: for the offence was that Campbell, in his *Life of Holt*, had stated that Chief Justices did not always come up to expectation; which Denman regarded as an insult to himself. Then Denman said to Brougham, "Campbell would behave ill to my puisnes: I must protect my puisnes." Personal enemies of Campbell and opponents of the Government attacked him in the press: one paper stating that there are various sorts of *assassination*, and that Lord Campbell is seeking to assassinate Lord Denman by paragraphs in the ministerial papers stating that he ought to resign from ill-health, whereas there is nothing the matter with him. Other papers pointed out Campbell's advanced age. We quote from the *Diary*:

All this seems rather hard upon me, as I have not had the remotest connection or privity with anything inserted in any newspaper upon the subject, and in truth Lord Denman has been treated with great forbearance and delicacy, as nothing has been said about his paralysis, and the degree to which he is incapacitated is cautiously concealed. I might most truly say that I am almost quite indifferent about the office: it has entirely lost all its charms. And indeed I do not think I could do its duties nearly as well as if I had been appointed six months ago.

The storm blew over. On March 1, 1850, Lord Denman formally resigned. The Chancellor then saw Mr. Justice Coleridge and the other puisnes of the Queen's Bench, who all expressed the greatest readiness to serve under Lord Campbell. Next day, at a meeting of the Cabinet, the Prime Minister said, "My lords and gentlemen, let me present you to the Chief Justice of England." Lord Campbell shook hands with all: thanked them for their kindness while their colleague: and immediately withdrew.

We had a merry evening at home and forgot all our anxiety. On Sunday we all went to church together and took the Holy Communion, praying that I might be enabled to perform the new duties to devolve upon me.

The great place was reached. And it remained for the Chief Justice to prove himself equal to it.

How he did so, the world knows. Even those who did not like Lord Campbell had to acknowledge that a more competent Chief Justice never presided in the Queen's Bench.

Yet, though his elevation was warmly received by both political parties, it is true that he was violently attacked by some up to the time of his appointment. "Without the slightest provocation on my part," he says in his Diary, "I am assailed by a storm of flippancy, scurrility, and falsehood." We may judge of it, by what Miss Martineau wrote of his elevation, after his death :—

Literature was not sufficient to occupy the energies of this industrious lawyer ; nor his office to satisfy his ambition. As might easily have been anticipated, he found another Judge who might be persuaded that he was too old and infirm for office, and had better resign in his favour. His old friend, Lord Denman, was pronounced in 1849 so infirm that he ought to resign the Chief Justiceship. Lord Denman protested, as Lord Plunket had done, that he was perfectly well able to go through his duties : but Lord Campbell thought otherwise ; and immediately the newspapers began to bewail Lord Denman's weight of years, and to predict that his sprightly comrade would soon be in his seat : and early in 1850 the event took place accordingly. When the spectators who saw him take his seat for the first time remarked on the "green old age" of the vivacious Judge, they asked one another, with mirth like his own, who would ever be able to persuade him that he was too old for office. Would he meet with a successor who would take no denial on that point, as he had taken none from the two old friends whom he had superseded ? *

The spitefulness of the passage is obvious. The full measure of its falsehood is not known to all.

Eleven years remained : years of very hard but happy and dignified work ; and of Hartrigge in the

* "Biographical Sketches," pp. 251, 252.

autumn. In leisure hours he wrote his "Lives of the Chief Justices." In 1854 his brother died: and on May 26th was laid beside their father.

The ceremony was conducted according to the Presbyterian fashion,—solemn prayers in the house before the procession began, and no religious service at the grave. The whole was awful and impressive. But the English Burial Service is very fine, and as I think it would be agreeable to the feelings of my family, I should wish it to be adopted when my time comes, and my remains are deposited in Jedburgh Abbey, where a resting-place is secured for us in very holy ground.

When the Palmerston Ministry came into office in 1859, the Chief Justice was asked to become Lord Chancellor; being the oldest man who ever took that office. He was in his eightieth year. But, body and mind, he was equal to his work: and it was a fitting close of his career. In March 1860, his wife was taken: it was the heaviest trial, and the last. Yet he rallied: and in September of that year there was beautiful weather, and he "had great enjoyment" of Hartrigge. Some can testify that indeed he had; and will not cease to remember how the old Lord Chancellor, still with every sense alert, and able to walk over rough ways for three hours at a stretch,—surrounded, for the last time, by nearly all his children,—and telling old stories of St. Mary's College long ago, passed that final holiday-time. He returned to his duties in London, and continued to fulfil them with all due efficiency. The last entry in his Diary was on Wednesday, June 12, 1861:—

Thank Heaven, I have got through my work creditably, if not splendidly. . . . I should not mind at all being honourably released from the labours and anxieties of the Great Seal. *Per-gustavi imperium*, and I should be satisfied to have repose during the remaining short space of my earthly career.

But he was to be a Chancellor who never received a retiring pension. All the pay he ever received from his country was in return for present work : none for work past. The idea would have pleased him. On Saturday, June 22, he sat in the Court of Chancery: in the afternoon he attended a Cabinet meeting, and walked home to Stratheden House. Then he sat down to his desk and wrote a judgment. There was a party at dinner : and speaking to his old friend, Sir David Dundas, of one who had long been lying on a sick bed, having lost all his faculties, Lord Campbell said he would wish a clause added to the Litany: "From a lingering illness, good Lord, deliver us." Throughout the evening, he talked with his usual animation; and he bade his children good-night about twelve o'clock. Next morning at eight his servant went into his room. He was sitting in his arm-chair, dead : spared "a lingering illness," "honourably released from the labours and anxieties of the Great Seal."

One thing was lacking to his career. Had he lived a little longer, we should doubtless have read, in the chronicle of such events, "The Earl of Stratheden resigned the Great Seal."

His body was carried to Hartrigge. And on Saturday, June 29, with the beautiful service of the Anglican Church which he had desired, he was laid beside his wife in the ruined Abbey of Jedburgh.



CHAPTER XVIII.

OF MISTAKES.

A CONSOLATORY ESSAY.



DO not believe that there is a more common human experience than Repentance : by which I mean being heartily sorry that you have done something : wishing from the bottom of your heart you had not done it : wondering how on earth you came to do it : seeing that you were a fool when you did it : thinking how differently you would do if you had another chance. The experience is never other than painful and humbling : but sometimes it is as bitter and heart-breaking as any that can be known by man.

Probably most men have a profound belief that they took the wrong turning in the chief choices of their life. They made a miserable mistake. They would not do the same again. They wear themselves with unavailing regrets. They fancy it was in them

to come to far more than they have come to : and to have lived a far happier life. A young man walks about, thinking what he is to do in the years before him, which (of course) are to be very many : making quite sure that he is to avoid all that (he now knows) embittered the lives of his parents : and to come to a great deal. An older man, not very old, walks about heavily, wishing he had not done the thing he did at most of the chief junctures : seeing what a poor thing he has made of it all : wishing he had his life before him to begin again : when in all the main things he would do just the opposite of what he has done.

There are wonderfully successful men, with whom this is not so : who have got on in a fashion which astonishes themselves : who at critical times were marvellously guided right : who have risen just about as high as may be in this life and world. But these men are so very few, and so entirely exceptional, that we need not take them into account in speaking of average humanity.

And neither, at the other end of the scale, need we here think much of those mortals who have made an utter ravelment of their life, and turned everything to bitterness. I am thinking of the average grumbling soul, who merely thinks he might have done better, and made more of himself and his chances. There are those who say to themselves, in unutterable sadness,—“I had my chance, I missed it : I tied a millstone round my neck, I can never be delivered

from it : I had the fairest prospects, I blighted them utterly : What a fool I was ! But I have suffered for it, God knows." That is the moan of some : of many. They do not say it. But they think it and feel it night and day.

My purpose is to write a consolatory essay. I think it may be done here. I should like to get hold of a good many folk who undergo the pangs of needless repentance, and keep themselves habitually in a misery for which there is little reason : no reason.

Of course, if everything is to be reckoned as a mistake, and mourned over as such, which was not the very wisest thing you could have done under the circumstances, it is to be admitted at once that all life is a series of mistakes. The very astutest man is a blunderer. The wisest of men did many extremely silly things. But if you did your best at the time, with the light you had : and if you be not an absolute fool, nor flighty and hasty beyond ordinary humanity : it is not probable that what you did was entirely idiotic : it is sure not to have been grievously wrong in morality : and there is no reason, as there is no good, in looking back upon it with paralysing and unserviceable regret.

I know, one of the most pathetic of all sights is to see a sufferer declare that it is *better as it is* : sometimes the words are *far better as it is* : when you know well that the sufferer could give you no reason whatsoever for thinking so. We cleave, in dark times,

with a touching tenacity, to the things we wish were true: to the things which (to say the fact) we are pretty well broken-hearted because we know not to be true. Many good people fancy that faith in God's Providence consists in believing certain things without any reason: in believing certain things although you see quite plainly they cannot be true. If we could really persuade ourselves that it is better as it is: or even that it is just as well as it is: it would make an end of the useless regrets and self-upbraidings which are far more than you would think in the hearts of a great many mortals, not by any means disreputable, and very fairly well to do. And that is the direction in which I desire gently to push you, friendly reader, who have reached middle age or more. I believe, though we have all made mistakes innumerable, and taken the wrong turning many times, yet, if we have been industrious and conscientious, just about as much has been made of us as it was in us to be made; and as for our place and work in life, and all the surroundings, things are just as well as they are as without some miracle of luck they could have been. And had the miracle of luck come: had we, spite of the most unpromising antecedents, and the most commonplace constitution, been pitchforked to an elevation which was extraordinary, however little extraordinary we ourselves were: should we have been so much the better for it? Would our life have been evenly joyous, though purple-clad flunkies continually

addressed us as *Your Grace* : or though half-savage iron-workers earned for us four hundred thousand a year ? I think we should soon have got accustomed to it. Some of us would have been ashamed of it.

Let it here be suggested that what mild consolation is to be proposed in these pages is not meant for the hapless few who have utterly spoiled their life. That may be done. We have all seen it done, only too often. But one may say, as a rule, it is done only by wrong-doing : by grievous wrong-doing. For to do what is wrong is always a mistake : and there is nothing to be said on the other side here. No doubt very many of those most wretched ones who have sunk to the depths of shame and degradation, never had a chance of anything better : and the awful phenomenon of Luck never seems so awful as when it bids poor men and women to be morally evil here ; and then, as some would have it, go to be worse and more miserable elsewhere. But though the plea may be put forward that some were born and educated into wrong and wretchedness, the consolation is not forthcoming in this case that it is no great matter, and that things are nearly as well as they are. Then, besides wrong-doing, it is to be remembered that all life may be blighted by folly. But it is generally by specially perverse and obstinate folly : as when a spoiled young woman marries a blackguard against all warning : and very speedily finds she has made a miserable and irremediable mistake. Even for such

cases there is hope : the case of no mortal is desperate. But such cases must go up for more potent treatment : and though something can be made of them, it will not be here. To fairly wipe off the stain, and be delivered from the misery, such human beings will have to begin again, far away. Here, they will have to walk apart, to walk softly : the face can never be unabashed, as once : the heart can never be light as in innocence. Farther than Australia, far further, is the country where a fresh start will be given to such as threw away their single chance here. My patients must be those who can be more simply treated : and for whom infinitely less drastic remedies will avail : those who chafe under the inconveniences of their way of life : regret their choice of a profession : think they might have accepted that pretty country parish with a small living which was offered last year but declined : wished they had not fixed their home in a region where the east wind very commonly blows : lament that they turned aside from a career in which their associates would have been people of culture, to abide among folk who without evil intentions rub them hourly against the grain : pine for green trees and grassy paths while it is in fact given them to continually walk upon paving-stones : possibly cherish the delusive belief that if they had married some one not seen for five-and-twenty years, their lives would have been all sunshine and music and romance.

Let it be admitted, to begin with, that probably no

man, living or departed, ever made one of the great choices of his life, without finding out, as time went on, that manifold cares and troubles came of the choice he made. And, under the vain illusion that if one did but choose wisely, there need be no cares nor troubles, but that we might live happily ever after, the man who has met this disappointing experience fancies he would have been all right had he taken the other turn where the paths diverged—gone into a different profession, married another woman, selected another life-work, dwelt among other scenes, lived in a cathedral close instead of a Scotch parish, worshipped habitually at Wells instead of in the parish kirk of Drum-sleekie. I think I know men, more than two or three, who make themselves very unhappy upon many days, lamenting what they esteem as the mistaken choices they have made, possibly many a year ago, whose consequences will never be escaped in this world. And I am quite sure such would be much the better for being reminded of this very plain truth and fact, very generally forgotten. Many men hasten to conclude that a thing was a mistake, and ought not to have been done, whenever they find that trouble comes of it: even inevitable trouble, which might have been foreseen and should have been allowed for: such men forgetting altogether that ten times or fifty times as much trouble would certainly have followed if they had not done that thing. They forget that in nearly every worldly choice, there is a choice of evils. You

escape toothache by going through the pain of having a tooth pulled out. I behold, oftentimes, a statue of white marble, a kneeling figure, on whose head an angel is setting the golden crown of the martyr. It was a friendly view of the case to represent that good man as such : but even the friends who thus represented his great reward exhibit, in relief below the calm image, a truculent little party engaged (they took three-quarters of an hour about it) in shooting, stabbing, and beating down to death the poor old sufferer. You could not have that grand crown unless by going through these experiences first. Then, further : there are few choices in this world where all the reasons are on one side. Sometimes there may be fourteen reasons for doing a thing, and fifteen for not doing it : and the reasons must not merely be counted, which is hard ; but *weighed*, which is infinitely harder. It does not follow at all that you made a mistake in life when you took that course which has landed you in many anxieties and sorrows. Far more and greater might have found you, had you taken any other course which was in fact open to you. It is a very plain counsel of homely sense, but it is not a whit the less a counsel most needful to many : Think when you are unhappy because you turned to the Right, how things would have been had you gone to the Left. The result will very likely be that you will find you have been repenting, accusing yourself, and bemoaning your folly, with very little reason. Think,

too, that the evils which are present to you are keenly felt : the evils which do not touch you are lightly regarded. The thorn, which has stuck itself into your hand, is a much more real and serious matter than a much bigger thorn which you merely look at, having been desired to consider how you would like it stuck into you.

A good many men live under the conviction that they made a sad mistake when they chose their profession. Sometimes this conviction comes through finding or fancying that their abilities, such as they are, would have had a better field elsewhere. Sometimes it comes of nothing more serious than that they see some other walk of life which has greater worldly attractions or advantages. And it is to be admitted that it is hard for any mortal to feel himself condemned to spend his days in doing work which he dislikes, and which he does badly, while there is work to be done in which he would delight and which he might do well. There are misplaced men ; lamely doing uncongenial duty, who had it in them to do something else excellently. And I do not know any man more to be envied than one who, in advancing years, when the realities are known by much experience, yet feels that were the choice to be made again he would select his life-work, with all its disadvantages and cares, more resolutely than even when he chose it with all the enthusiasm of youth. It was touching to read in the biography

of one whose place in life was anything but what is generally esteemed an enviable one, how in one of his last days he said to a friend who was by, "Man, don't you know what it is to like your work, and to wish to be at it?" Yet even that man, though thus liking his work, did not hesitate to say to such as knew him well, that if he had to begin life again he would give himself indeed to the same work, but amid quite different surroundings and under a wholly different commission. I know a walk in life which numbers among the men who have to pursue it a very considerable number of persons of high ability and culture. It is a singular and sad fact that nearly all the best among them regret that they are there. They are profoundly dissatisfied. I know nearly every man of mark among them : many a time have I heard the words, "If I had to begin my life again, it would not be here." And it is a hard thing to be thoroughly out of sympathy with the system and the personnel amid which you live. Further, a system is in a bad way which to conciliate the stupidest and sourest of its supporters alienates all its best and worthiest sons. Yet, I often think that the persons I have in view are (most of them) entirely mistaken in thinking they made a mistake in their choice of life. With all its drawbacks, the system under which they live has given them room to grow as probably no other would have done. They are much bigger men there than they would be in a certain locality

to which they sometimes look with longing eyes. I remember, in my youth, hearing a man of gentle and refined genius, a graceful poet, who had to give himself to the squabbles of local politics, say, very sadly: "I have missed stays in life." In fact, you could hardly have found a better niche for him. The political views he had to maintain were those which he heartily believed to be true: they did not take up very much of his time: and from the poor strifes of the little burgh the gentle poet turned with inexpressible delight to the sanctuary of noble thoughts, his own and others', of which he kept the key. He was just as well placed in life as a man so exceptional could be. Even so is it, I am quite sure, with certain whom I will not name; who fancy themselves sorrowfully misplaced. They are doing a good work. They have the sympathy of all whose sympathy they would value among the people they know. They are often abused and vilified by mortals incapable of understanding them; but that is a very mild martyrdom. For those abusive mortals can do them no harm. And assuredly, when the souls I have in view go to certain regions of this world, they meet a welcome there which is abundant recompense for a good deal of trouble at home. The very fact that they come from far, and are (in a sense) outsiders, gains for them a reception which otherwise they could not have had. On the whole, I do not in any way pity them. They have what may well suffice. In any

case, they are (what schoolboys call) *In for it*: and they must make the best of things. They might not make the bargain if it were to make again. But it is by no means such a bad bargain.

I sometimes think that any man who is growing old, and to whom it has been appointed in this life to earn his own bread, ought to be thankful to find himself in any settled and fairly-creditable vocation. It tends to make one so, to look round upon those who started along with us, and to remark here and there the clever fellow who would not settle to steady work, who would not get into one of the recognised grooves of human affairs. Such clever fellows tend to be unsteady in another sense than lack of fixity of aim: and here, doubtless, is a main cause of their failure. But even where this is not so, you know the sorrowful upshot of not sticking to the track, not choosing a line and holding to it. The income is precarious: all incomes are precarious that are made up of scraps. Give us steady wages, whether little or great. You have known a brilliant man, with a hundred times the brains of some wealthy mortal who wants to get into Parliament (with the single purpose of serving his country), thankful to earn a few pounds by doing election jobs, writing squibs and canvassing: and meekly bearing to be sworn at by the wealthy mortal in the hour of defeat. It is very sad, to find a man of true ability and eloquence, and content to work very hard, waiting, like a cab on

the stand, for some one to hire his brains : for some one to get him to write on some subject in which he feels no interest, or to puff some doing which he sees to be contemptible. And such a man, living from hand to mouth, even if he has no one but himself to support, must many times look forward to the future with fear : thinking of days when the poor wearied brain and hand will not be able to work any more, and when there will no longer be the nerve to push himself forward amid younger and fresher competitors. Surely, thus meditating ; and beholding how solid mortals who never had half his ability, and who never worked half so hard, but who got into one of the main grooves and kept to it, have distanced him in life,—are Judges, Bishops, or at the least are thriving business men and rosy country parsons, filling recognised positions, and not without the confidence thence arising,—the brilliant Bohemian that never would run steadily in harness must feel that he has made a mistake in his choice of life.

People smile, and fancy you are passing into romantic regions, when you make mention of the mistakes made by men and women in the choice of a partner in life. But there is nothing romantic here : it is the most prosaic truth that this choice utterly blights many lives : converts others into a succession of petty irritations and humiliations : pulls down some soaring souls to a realm of sordid details : disappoints and disillusiones human beings as nothing else can :

and would eventuate in very frequent repentance but for the blessed power which is in decent folk of reconciling themselves to the inevitable, and of making the best of a bad bargain. Yet one has known a man to whom the bitter mistake meant that he should never know a light heart any more. One has known a poor girl, when little more than a child (not indeed without great folly in those who should have been her guides), hopelessly ruin all her life. One wonders, thinking how such choices are made, that in many cases they turn out so well. With a large class, one sees this indissoluble engagement formed between young men and women who know next to nothing of one another. And one remembers that not merely principle and a good life, but likewise temper, temperament, likings and antipathies, habits and tendencies, make or mar the peace of domestic life. A morose, secretive man : a vain, extravagant woman, who cannot understand Money : a feeble creature, who contentedly drives up to the railway half-an-hour after the train is gone : an *untruthful* husband or wife : I do not even name the frightful possibilities of drunkenness or unfaithfulness, though one has seen them too often : what but a sorrowful resignation to the inevitable can there be where such things are ? I remember, many a year ago, a homely old man addressing a young man, lately married, in the downright words, "I am glad to hear that your wife has good health ; for *a delicate wife is a great*

plague !" Those who heard the words knew that the good old man spoke from most adequate experience. It must be hard to compose a historical dissertation, or the like, in a house of small extent, in which dwells a woman of the noblest sentiments, but at the present hour in violent hysterics. "What is life without sentiment?" was the almost unanswerable question once addressed to my friend Smith. But doubtless there are things even more indispensable. As I wrote these last words, I was told that Mrs. Somebody waited without, wishing to see me. I went: and beheld a young face which should have been pretty, but was haggard: and heard the words, "Will you give me something for the children to-night? He's a very thoughtless man and has sent me nothing." It is my duty to know all about everybody in this place, and I knew the story was true. It was a sad comment on what was in my mind: one who might have been a well-to-do maidservant of five-and-twenty, as well lodged and fed as her mistress, but who would marry an idle scapegrace; and so had to come to-night begging for her two little children. And the little incident brought back to me, over many years, the stern and worn face of an aging man, whom I met in a lonely place, looking just as miserable as man could look. He was earning a large income, but his slatternly idiot of a wife muddled it away: the house was untidy and comfortless: and the gloom of care never lifted. In such

cases you cannot go back, blot out the error, and begin anew. There is no second chance. And repentance, though very deep, will not take away the consequences of that fatal mistake. One has known instances, more than one or two, where all that was possible was to be thankful for that Place, far distant, where those who have failed, irremediably, in this world, may make a fresh start, with the experience of this life, and with all its lessons. You may remember a striking passage in which John Stuart Mill says that one who had enjoyed a fair share of the blessings of this life might (in his judgment) feel that the time had come to contentedly lie down to the eternal rest of nothingness: the hard thing would be for one to have to go out of this life who had never truly lived at all. And certainly, if one believed there was nothing beyond this world, it is hard to know what comfort could be suggested to those who have, by a mistaken choice, involved themselves in troubles to which not even long habit can in any measure reconcile; and to whom this life, if this life be all, must be unmingled bitterness. The consolations of religion are the only consolations which avail here. And if there be no future life, there are no consolations of religion.

It is to be confessed that now and then one has found an old man who profoundly believed that all that stood between him and being infinitely happier and better through all his years on earth, was his

having failed to marry some special angel of all perfection. To the last, such have thought how different life might have been. But if it has happened to you to make the acquaintance of the woman thus glorified in the old gentleman's remembrance, your feeling, I venture to say, was one of simple astonishment. The old gentleman was under a profound illusion. It was the well-known phenomenon of the mirage.

Many fairly-educated persons are not familiar with the writings of Milton or of Bacon, but are well-read in Dickens. Wherefore, an instance may be taken from that most charming author. You remember what he esteemed as his best work : what certainly contains a good deal of his own history : "David Copperfield." You remember how Copperfield, apparently with the entire approval of his delineator, seems to suppose that if he had but married rightly, he would have been perfectly happy. He tells us that a vague general dissatisfaction ran through all his life with Dora : a blank sense of something lacking, which might have been continually present, and which would have entirely satisfied his spiritual nature. Greater delusion never was. The sense of something lacking : the vague dissatisfaction : is in fact the imperfection, the dissatisfaction, which must be in this mortal life : which has been in it since Solomon's days and before them ; which found its expression in the unforgettable "Vanitas Vanitatum" :

which hard work and immediate anxiety can crowd out for a little while ; but which can be escaped by no one for whom the immediate necessities are so supplied that he has leisure to look up, and take in the general scope of all this life. Copperfield's philosophy really comes to this : that for a man to marry the right person is the same thing as to go to heaven : and further, that a man has made a mess of his life unless he has succeeded in being evenly and perfectly happy. Of course this is absurd. No skill or prudence can make life that : and though a good and wise wife is certainly the greatest of all worldly blessings, to find such is not equal to getting into Paradise. This world and its cares must still spread around you : innumerable anxieties and troubles will get at you : and the shadow of Parting hangs over, always. You are not carried away to a residence

In worlds whose course is equable and pure ;
No fears to beat away—no strife to heal,
The past unsigh'd for, and the future sure.

That, briefly and beautifully stated, is what we all want : and, as plain fact, it is not to be had here. Copperfield had forgot his Ecclesiastes. And in all likelihood, he had never read a certain famous sentence which occurs within the first ten lines of the "Confessions of St. Augustine," and which is quite familiar to very many who have never read any

more in the very unequal writings of that singular Saint.

The sum of what counsel I venture to address to the reader, is simple. Yet it is needed by human beings beyond numbering, both old and young. What we need is, in short, to take in and find out for ourselves the truth of the most worn commonplaces. The counsel is, briefly, Reconcile yourself (if you are to remain in this world at all) to the conditions of your being: do not vex yourself, and break your heart, struggling against what is Irremediable. Do not look to find here what is not to be found. Do not fancy that wiser and luckier folk have found it, and that you would have found it too but for some unhappy mistake you made at a critical turning in your life. The mistakes you have made, if you be an ordinary mortal living an ordinary life, have not, in fact, done your life much harm. You are making just about as much of things in this world as it was in you to make at all. Make the best of the bargain you have made, in this or that. Doubtless you see it was not a perfectly wise bargain. You would not make it again. Had you been considerably wiser than Solomon you might never have made it at all. But you are in for it now. Make the best of things, in good-nature and cheerfulness. Do not mope, and keep thinking, thinking, how much better you might have done, and (like Mr. Bumble) how cheap you went. So doing, you will be

making the very worst of things. You will be deliberately blackening the sky under which you must live if you are to live at all : you will grow into a curse to yourself and a nuisance to your neighbours. There is plenty for you to do : Go and do it. There are people a thousand times worse off than you : Try and help them. And for any sake, do not be always thinking about yourself. Get away from that unsatisfactory subject of contemplation. And be quite sure that if you have told your special friends, about ten times each, how unhappy you are and how many blunders you have made, they are by this time most uncommonly sick both of you and them.

Being what you are, it is quite certain that if you had not done the foolish things you did, you would have done something else as bad or worse. You married early, when you could not afford it : you had some anxious years : days have been when it seemed the poor head was to go under water altogether. Well, but it did not. You have lived through these anxieties : Why recall them ? You have got upon firm ground : Be thankful : It is far more and better than you deserve. And the burden which lay on you so heavily may have saved you from making an inexpressible fool of yourself. A man of sixty dangling after some silly girl of five-and-twenty is an amazing and humbling object of contemplation. Even he suspects himself to be a fool : everybody around knows it. Now you, with your seven grown-up sons, and with

your masterful wife, are safe not to make a fool of yourself in that particular way. Other ways are open to you. But not one which leads to manifestations quite so deplorable and contemptible. It is likely enough you would advise a friend not to take the turning you did. A man who has a mother-in-law will generally counsel any mortal to marry an orphan. But this comes of your knowing the evils you have, and being unaware of those which are waiting round the corner, and from which no earthly lot is free. You must take all things here, your profession, your wife, your house, your horses, your servants, your native country with its climate, all your environment, for Better for Worse. A friend worries you by little weaknesses : but he is better than no friend at all. He may be likened to a gift of a thousand pounds, subject to a deduction of two hundred and fifty. It is a disadvantage about a locomotive engine that it gets so hot. But you must accept the engine under that deduction. For it will not go unless it be so hot. If you, being a human being living in this imperfect system of things, will break away from everything which has its inconveniences, you will leave yourself without any possessions or surroundings whatsoever.

To speak gravely : One remarks, in these advancing years, that the great anxiety and care of worthy men and women, growing old, are about their children : the lesser ones, still going to school : the bigger ones, for whom you are seeking an aim in life, or who

have gone far away. No doubt, if you had no children, you would be free from many anxious thoughts. The income would go much farther. The furniture and the painting of your house would last much longer. You could indulge in many luxuries, now impossible. You might buy books without stint, and cross the Alps yearly. But you would not have these selfish indulgences at the price. It is a cheerless thing, a childless home. No one will bear with you in the last fretfulness, and smooth the last steps of your way, like your own boy or girl. If there be in you any good at all, it has been brought out mainly by the continual presence and charge of your children. And you have had gleams of a pure and unselfish happiness, which are unknown in a lonely life. Had you kept clear of the responsibilities of life, and given no hostages to fortune, you would, no doubt, have presented a narrow mark to the shafts of care. But, unless you were a very poor creature indeed, every time you heard the laughter of the little ones, and watched their winsome ways, their thoughtless merriment, you would have felt that you had missed the best happiness of this life. And to do that of your own free-will is surely the greatest of all mistakes. Your library may be full of beautifully-bound volumes, your carpets unworn, your walls unmarked by little fingers: no sudden noises may jar your nerves: no eager little face look in when you are in the very middle of a complicated sentence, and break the

tenor of your thoughts. And you never yet saw the childish eyes close upon this world : nor received the last kiss from lips that were growing cold : when Somebody (as of old) "called to Himself a little child." You never knew that terrible trial, which no faith and no hope could make anything other. But neither did you ever see the bright looks lighted up when you return from a brief absence : nor did little pattering feet run to meet you. You never were earnestly questioned as to what you had brought : having earnestly considered London shop-windows in the search for something to bring. You may have been told, but you do not know, as you might, that these little creatures (coming from where Wordsworth tells us), whether abiding with you here or gone on before you, are the instruments in the Best Hand to bring out the very best that can be made of His creatures here. All that good is worth having, even at what it costs. A great deal has to be paid for it, no doubt. But unless in morbid and transient moods, you would not wish to have done without it.

Let the teaching of these pages be briefly summed up in a closing word. There is a great deal of margin in human nature, and a great power of recovering itself after it has gone wrong. You have eaten and drunk many things that were bad for you, yet not been much the worse for it. And if your lot have been an average one, you need not fancy that

you have materially spoilt your life, though you see now that you have made a vast number of sad mistakes. There is comfort to many now getting far on in the pilgrimage in the thought that, though there has been an infinity of follies and blunders, only too well remembered, yet in the upshot things are just about as well with you as (your nature and surroundings being what they are) they could have been : and it was not in you to do much more than, in fact, you have done.

Therefore, instead of moaning over days past, with their opportunities missed, and their idiotic sayings and doings, we shall all set ourselves to do the best we can in the days which yet remain. And if there be blots on the page which can never be rubbed out where we are, there is the supreme consolation that some day we may hope to turn over a quite new leaf, and to make a quite fresh start, far away.



CHAPTER XIX.

THE IDEAL OF A NATIONAL CHURCH: AN UNPRACTICAL IMAGINATION.



YOU all know what it is to sit down by the fireside, quite alone; and to picture out pleasant things which you are sure will never be, for yourselves and your children. When you come to know people well, you find that many more indulge in this dream-life than you would once have believed: and among them some quite prosaic folk. Let me confess that in long walks about this parish, solitary walks, I have often beguiled the way by picturing out, in full detail, the parish as "worked" to a perfection now unknown; and not likely to be known before the Millennium. One imagines all evil gone, all pain, all wrong-doing: and everything happy and good marvellously grown. Specially when from a certain height one has looked down upon the solemn city, the red roofs, the dark spires and ruins cutting against

the purple sea, one has pictured the vast cathedral restored in glory, the place of a worthy worship, purified from all taint of error, sincere and sublime: daily thronged by devout multitudes, each soul finding help, guidance, and comfort: as, in fact, never cathedral was, here or elsewhere. But the vision goes, and there are the desolate fragments, wind-swept and mournful beyond words. Even better than any material magnificence, one has beheld, as in a dream, a sacred city where was no want, no drunkenness, no ignorance, not one heavy heart: where all the people were well-to-do, good, and content: where life was earnest, and yet beautiful; full of healthful work, yet having the due share of bright play: specially where every little child was wisely and kindly cared for: and the Church the central spring of all. As I know that I shall never see these things, and could not bring them to be, even though to-morrow I found a four-leaved shamrock, one may enjoy them for a little in this airy fashion; the vision of a place where was no ill-nature, no gossip: and of course (a churchman may be permitted to fancy) no dissent! In fact, there is not very much. But in reverie, there would not be so much as a single Non-conformist for Sydney Smith to stick a fork in. The good Christians who stand apart from us would all have drawn together again.

Among such unpractical imaginations is that which is to be slightly sketched in the following pages:

the Ideal of a National Church. I do not go deep : I keep off the perilous question of Doctrine. It is but of Worship and Government one has meditated in these seasons of reverie. I know well how utterly vain and purposeless are the suggestions to be made. The practical difficulties are so great. Even to push these views would need some one much stronger than the writer ; much fonder of strife ; and with a much tougher skin. Nothing on this earth would induce me to engage in ecclesiastical controversy : I have remarked how like to devils such controversialists grow. But a dream may be permitted, of what might have been ; though it will never be. One may be allowed to fancy what, if it were all to begin again, with a blank page, it might be well to do.

The writer is engaged in the practical working of one of the two National Churches of Britain : revering and loving both equally, and earnestly desiring they were drawn nearer. He is sincerely devoted to his own Church, though not unaware of her wants and weaknesses : seriously pledged never, directly or indirectly, to aim at what might harm her, though needing no pledge to bind him : finally, bound to her as one used by her kindly as man can be. Reverently and humbly he ventures to suggest certain respects in which improvement seems possible in his own Church ; and in her grander and more powerful Sister.

If there is to be a National Church at all, it is plainly desirable that it should include, if not the

entire nation, then as large a part of the nation as possible: all in the nation who do not stand apart upon principle. As it is not possible to force people into conformity with the National Church, the only remaining way of getting people to conform to it is by attracting them to it: that is, by making things about the Church such as people will like, and will be pleased with. I purpose to point out certain respects in which National Churches have hitherto failed to make themselves as pleasant as they might be to as great a number of people as possible. I do not pretend to any special knowledge of church history; *that* is not in the least necessary for my purpose. I shall build on no facts but such as everybody knows. No good, therefore, will follow from some small-minded, well-informed person laying himself on my track to catch me tripping in little details, and then shewing me up with the air of a man who has answered me. Such treatment would be merely irrelevant. But it would not be unprecedented.

I.

WORSHIP.

Let us first think of Worship.

Public worship is esteemed as a necessary part of the organisation of all Christian communities. People meet together, in buildings appointed for the purpose, at least on Sundays, and join in a certain ritual. We

put the Church of Rome out of our view, as far too big, and too confirmed in its own way of doing things, to be in the least degree affected by anything to be said at this time of day. And looking at the Protestant communions of Britain, it may be said that their public worship consists of prayer, praise, the reading of Scripture, and preaching: with the occasional celebration of sacramental solemnities of a special character. In England the prayers are provided by authority, and read by the officiating minister from a printed book. In Scotland the officiating minister invents or compiles his own prayers, and the congregation can never be sure of what is coming. In England the worship is in large part antiphonal: the people respond to the sentences said by the clergyman. In Scotland the people listen to or join in the prayers in silence: not even *Amen* is audibly said, unless in exceptional places. As for praise, the main difference is that in England the singing has instrumental accompaniment; in Scotland, generally, not so. For the reading of the lessons, and the preaching, things are much alike in both countries. There are differences, further, in the way in which the clergy on either side of the Tweed are arrayed: the distinction is mainly that between Black and White. And in England the officiating priest does part of the service in one place; then moves a few feet off and does another part; turning about, likewise, in several directions: all this for very good reasons, but for

reasons not known to the uneducated portion of the congregation. In Scotland the architect fixes on a point where the clergyman can be seen, and whence he can be heard; and proceeding to that point, he does the entire service, with no change of attitude beyond standing up and sitting or kneeling down. Very keen likes and dislikes exist in the mind of many people as to the various points of difference in these ways of conducting public worship.

Now it seems to me that those who have arranged the methods of public worship in National Churches, have fallen into error by selecting, or devising, and enforcing, that one form of worship which was in their judgment the best; ignoring the inevitable difference there must always be between the likings of the more and the less cultivated in such matters; not to mention the likings of exceptional classes as well as individuals. Thus in England the worship of the National Church has been proved by long trial to repel the poor, and even the lower middle class; while in Scotland the worship of the National Church has been proved by centuries of trial to repel the more cultivated. In Cornwall, in Wales, in large parts of Yorkshire, the Church persists in providing a worship which the masses will not accept; and thus in driving them out of the Church to get what they want; which ought to be provided for them within the Church. The Anglican Church virtually says to the poor, "You ought to like this,

because it is the best in the opinion of those most qualified to judge." It is as though you persisted in thrusting Mozart's music on people who are educated only up to the mark of appreciating a negro melody. But a thing is not good unless it is good to you. And if you be so ignorant and uncultivated that you cannot enjoy or even discern the inexpressible beauty of the Liturgy, nor join with pleasure in choral worship under the sublime vault of this cathedral or that, it will serve no purpose to try to thrust the thing upon you. Now, why should not the National Church recognise the great varieties of taste that exist in the nation; and provide or permit an equal variety in its public worship?—providing Canterbury Cathedral and York Minster with their grand service for such as like it; and the flat-roofed brick meeting-house too with its homely preacher for the numbers who crowd to it, and who can enjoy its rude prayers and exhortations? All religious feeling should be permitted to find its expression within the pale of the Church; and the religious feeling of all kinds of people, the rudest and humblest as well as the most cultivated. Why not recognise the fact that a very ordinary man, who cannot at all see the difficulties which surround many theological topics to the view of persons with more insight, is eminently fitted to please and profit many congregations; and so recognise the useful service of very ordinary men, confident, loud-voiced, fluent of speech and zealous of heart? Why

not recognise the fact that a cultivated scholar is less fitted to reach certain classes than a man drawn from their own order ; and thus have hewers of wood and drawers of water within the Church rather than outside it ? One Sunday afternoon, being in a little cathedral city, I went to the cathedral ; one of the noblest in England, with a truly grand service, most carefully and reverently performed. There was hardly any congregation in the magnificent place. There was no sermon : the sermon in the morning had been incredibly weak and stupid. Coming out of the church, and passing through a dirty by-street, I saw a large crowd pouring out of the very shabbiest little conventicle I ever beheld. So there were Christian people in that little city that May Sunday, ready to go to church if they were interested in what was done there, yet who plainly were not at all attracted or interested by the worship of the minster. Why were these poor people driven out of the Church of England to get what they wanted ? Why does not the Church of England provide for them as well as for their betters ? I do not know what sect that little meeting-house belonged to ; but I am bold to say that the crowd of people who attended it went there simply because the worship in it pleased them, and not in the least because they had any fault to find with the doctrine or government of their National Church. There seems to be no good reason for a hard and fast uniformity of worship within the Church. Plain

buildings, without organs, with a service permitting the utmost liberty of extemporaneous prayer, which, though rude and irreverent and abhorrent to a cultivated taste, can yet adapt itself to the present wants and feelings of poor people as no Liturgy ever can, ought to be part of the equipment of the Church of England. No principle is involved in the matter. It is a mere matter of expediency. But the expediency is very obvious and urgent. Are you, lest you permit a worship beneath the æsthetic sensibilities of the best educated, to drive scores of thousands of zealous Christians into hostile separation? The æsthetic folk need never go to the plain conventicles; so they will not be offended. And the difference is immense, between two opposing armies; and two divisions, wearing different uniform, of the same army. There might be some rivalry, some antagonism, between the grand Gothic parish church, with its surpliced choir and its intoned prayers and its upper-class congregation; and the modern brick erection where these things are not, but other things are found which are very dear to the worshippers they suit. But there would not be the thorough estrangement, the smouldering fire of dislike and suspicion, which (spite of all smooth pretences) almost always part Church and Dissent. All parties, now, would be loyal children of the Church of England.

In large towns, there would be separate buildings fitted for the diverse forms of worship. But in small

parishes, where there is but one church, why not let the church be occupied, at separate hours, by the people who prefer either use? Many parishioners would be found to attend both forms of service. And the same clergyman might easily conduct both. Supply will speedily follow demand. If it is once understood that the power of conducting simple services, in which the sermon is the outstanding thing, and in which the sermon is to be extemporaneous, homely, and fitted to keep up by all means short of extravagance the attention of plain folk, is demanded of the Anglican clergy, hundreds of clever men will appear, fully qualified to do in good style all that is needed. After conducting the decorous liturgical service in the morning, and reading a neat discourse of twenty minutes to a small congregation of the better sort, the priest will in the evening cast off all conventional restraints; pray in a homely and familiar style, with special references to the peculiar character and circumstances of the people; and preach without book in a rough and pointed fashion, full of the homeliest illustration, to a great crowd who would but for this service be filling the pews of the dissenting chapel.

And if such increased liberty as to the form of worship be needful in England to hold the poor, not less needful is it in Scotland to hold the rich. The national Presbyterian service does excellently for the

less educated; but you will never get cultivated people to really approve a service which is exactly what the officiating minister may choose to make it; which is dependent not merely on that individual's good taste, devout feeling, and command of language, but on things about him which are not constant qualities—as the state of his nervous system on that particular day. “I can think, here in my study, of what I should wish to say in prayer on such a special occasion: but I have not that command of my nervous system that I could be sure of saying it worthily when the time came: So you must excuse me from officiating.” Such were the words once said to the writer by one of the best of Scotch ministers.* The writer was a young man: the speaker was a true-blue Presbyterian: but the saying suggested many things, which were not expressed. So long as the minister occupies a much higher place than the flock, intellectually and spiritually, the Scotch fashion may do: but not after that ceases to be so. The upshot is, that a very large proportion of the most cultivated members of the Scotch Church tell you frankly that they disapprove its worship; that they adhere to it on political grounds, supporting it as the National Establishment: that when in England they as of course conform to the Church of England; and that if the Scotch Church were disestablished, and thus ceased to make its claim on them as one of the institutions

* The late Dr. Veitch, of St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh.

of the country, they would go where they would find a worship they prefer, and turn Scotch Episcopalians. And, though it is quite wrong to represent that anything like a majority of the aristocracy and the landed gentry of Scotland are Episcopalians, yet it is certain that many of these classes are members of the Episcopal communion ; so much so, that this little denomination, numbering a seventy-fifth part of the population numerically, has probably one-half of the educated part of the nation. In some places it has a still larger proportion. But if an Episcopalian means one who believes in the exclusively divine right of Episcopal church government, or even who cares much about any form of church government, then the more intelligent of the members of the Scotch Episcopal communion have no right whatever to the name of Episcopalian. They tell you, probably, they go to their chapel simply for the prayers ; they cannot bear to be helplessly in the preacher's hands for that portion of the service ; and they admit, with great frankness, the inexpressible badness of the preaching which they commonly hear in their little sanctuary. Few Scotch Episcopalians know that when Episcopacy was established in Scotland, the Prayer-Book was not used. The Episcopal service and the Presbyterian were identical. The Prayer-Book is the essence of Episcopacy, in the mind of the average Scotch Episcopalian. And while the Episcopal Church had no Prayer-Book, the Presbyterian Church had one for many a year.

Now, as the National Church in England may fairly be asked to yield a little to keep or regain the poor, why not the National Church in Scotland to keep or regain the rich? There is something deeper and more respectable than the instinct of conformity to fashion in the case of many whom the Liturgy has drawn away from the national worship; and it is a grievous misfortune, and a thing of evil omen to the country, if it comes to be so, that the rich and poor, already far too much divided, are to be divided still more vitally by the gulf of religious separation. It is an evil thing for the rich, if they put themselves in a little band on one side, with the vast majority of their countrymen dead against them in hostile array. Scotland is, of all countries, the country where it is absolutely suicidal for the aristocracy and the landed gentry to separate themselves in their worship from the mass of their countrymen. However little these people may like the national worship, it would be wise in them to conform to it, and try to mend it. This, in these days, they could easily and quickly do.

I am bold to say that the main reason why the Scotch aristocracy have lost (as they have lost) their hold on the nation is, that they are becoming, in considerable part, an alien aristocracy: aliens specially in religion; and this in a nation where religious feeling runs high, and where the general level of intelligence is very high. The weavers of a big Scotch village can give at least as clear a reason for the faith,

political and religious, that is in them, as the squire can who lives in the great house near. The reason may be wrong, and may draw great part of its force from class prejudice ; but it is clearly seen, tenaciously held, and capable of fluent and forcible expression.

As I have ventured to suggest that the Anglican Church might, to its great strengthening, permit services within its pale formed on the Scotch model, so let it be asked why might not the Scotch National Church permit within its pale such services as might satisfy those who now, in desire of something more decorous, go off to Episcopal nonconformity ? Of course this would not satisfy those who in conscience believe that without Episcopal orders there is no church ; but there is little indeed of that belief in hard-headed and common-sense Scotland. After the morning service for the multitude, according to the old use, why not have a service in which the prayers are read, for such as want it ? Principle is not involved. Prayers are already read in some Scotch churches : why not in all, at such an hour as may offend none and please many ?

Another word. If you are to have read prayers at all, you lose the main good of them unless they are Responsive. Even those in Scotland who use the beautiful services of the Book of Common Order of the Church Service Society, complain of a certain chilliness which comes of the absence of Responses : and try hard to attain at least to the saying audibly of the

Lord's Prayer and the Amens. Further, a brand-new Liturgy, however excellent, will not do: It must be one surrounded by old associations. The Liturgy for the English-speaking world is the Book of Common Prayer. There is nothing better in this world. And its use would draw together those who have been too long held apart.

Let me sum up what has been said. A National Church ought to permit the utmost variety in its worship. If the congregation of any church desire with unanimity to have anything that is not properly outrageous, let them have it, and God's blessing on it. Specially, a National Church ought to provide worship of the two great opposed species: the liturgical service, which must evermore commend itself to the more cultivated; the extemporaneous, flexible service, with its great power of adaptation to present circumstances, which will always attract the poor.

II.

GOVERNMENT.

The National Church must have some kind of government. Lazy men among the working clergy must be kept up to their work: foolish men (in so far as possible) kept straight: disreputable men punished or cast out. So far, a Church is like any other association of human beings; from a boat's crew or a lodge of Odd Fellows up to a nation. In the

case of the Church, there is the further impression in many minds that an unbroken succession ought to be kept up through its governors : that is, the same persons are to act as spiritual progenitors, and as moral policemen or magistrates. Well-grounded or groundless, the belief is widely diffused that in the Church the line must be kept unbroken : each individual ruler or office-bearer exercises his authority because it has been passed on to him, with solemn observances, from those who went before him. It is not necessary that you have an unbroken succession of colonels to make an existing colonel competent. If you have a skilful and able military commander, equal to his work, it matters not at all though he be the first of his order, and without official pedigree. Efficiency is the test, elsewhere, of a ruler being the right man for his place. But if you believe some, you will fancy that the most incompetent ruler, in the Church, may be the right man ; and the most efficient, the wrong man. Doctrine is involved here : and I put this question aside meanwhile.

What is the right Government for the Ideal National Church ?

Practically, we find that under any, the individual parochial incumbent has leave to do much as he likes : unless in very extraordinary cases of foolishness or wickedness.

I take for granted that the question of Church Government, like that of worship, is to be settled by

considerations of expediency. The best and most useful government is the right one. The right government is that which governs best : whose practical conveniences and advantages are greatest. I do not believe that any church government is of Divine authority in such a sense as to make every other church government wrong, and displeasing to God. There is not the slightest warrant in written Revelation for such a belief. There are things in written Revelation which point in quite opposite directions : and there is no simple, explicit, unmistakable announcement of the Divine will. I judge from this, that the thing is of no great consequence : I judge from this that it may be left for men to settle among themselves ; and that what suits the genius of a nation (which may be conspicuously unsuited to the genius of the next nation) is the right thing for that nation. Of course we all know that there are persons who hold Episcopacy to be the church government which is exclusively of Divine right. It is pleasant to find a dogma compactly and clearly stated : and I have satisfaction in making the following quotation from a little volume entitled, *Questions and Answers illustrative of the Church Catechism*.*

“ Q. By what outward mark may we distinguish the Church from these separated bodies ?

“ A. Most easily, by its having the three holy orders of the ministry, Bishops, Priests, and Dea-

* London, Joseph Masters : 1867.

cons, deriving their power from Christ through the Apostles.

“Q. Is no community of Christians then a part of the Church without these holy orders?

“A. NO : WITHOUT THEM THERE IS NO CHURCH.”

Some centuries ago, many in Scotland held Presbytery to be the church government of exclusively Divine right. None such are now to be found, unless among the most ignorant and prejudiced. Intelligent members of the Scotch Church take no higher ground than this: that Presbytery has just as much and as little Divine authority as any other form of government; and that it suits the race amid which it has (in Britain) found its home. It is curious, that while in Scotland the belief in the exclusive right of Presbytery has died out in the cultivated class, it is just in a highly-cultivated though narrow class in England that the dogma of the exclusive right of Episcopacy, unknown to the chief of the founders of the Church of England, has in these last years revived. And common candour constrains one to admit that something very like Episcopal church government was very early developed in the Christian Church, and continued without break till the Reformation. Nothing in the least degree resembling Presbytery had been known since the third century, till it was devised and set up in the sixteenth. And the benefits of Presbytery ought to be very great and unquestionable, to justify a variation from the mode of the entire

Catholic Church, for at least thirteen hundred years.

The existing forms of church government are practically three : Episcopacy, Presbytery, Independency. Beginning with the Brownists, or Independents, we may cast aside their system from our present inquiry : both because it is plain it never can prevail, and because it virtually amounts to Presbytery. For though the peculiar theory of Independency is that each congregation of Christian people meeting together for worship forms a church, with right of self-government, and answerable to no authority beyond itself, it is known that these separate churches or congregations associate themselves in a Union which is to all intents a Church in the ordinary sense : and that if the minister of any individual church venture to teach doctrines different from those taught by the other ministers in the Union, he is cut off from the Union, and so rattened, or marked as a knob-stick or black sheep. And the persons who sit in judgment upon his doctrine, and decide whether or not he shall be rattened, are the ministers of neighbouring congregations : who thus in fact act as a Presbytery. The difference is, that whereas a Presbytery is a legal court, bound by well-known laws of evidence and procedure, these Independent ministers are a court analogous to the governing body of a trades union : decide, not upon evidence, but upon hearsay or gossip ; and may ratten their friend without putting him upon any regular

defence. It is plain that a government consisting of three or four self-constituted judges meeting in a back parlour in secrecy, and deciding on such evidence as that Mrs. Smith said the other day to Mrs. Brown, who told it to Mrs. Jones, who repeated it to one of the judges, that Mr. Robinson had really been preaching such terrible things that she could not go to hear him any more, will not do for the ideal National Church. Indeed the best men among the Independents do not defend their system. I could add much more : but I do not choose to indicate individuals.

The choice, then, lies between Episcopacy and Presbytery. Let us look at the *pros* and *cons*.

The nature of these two forms of church government is, in the main, well understood. You see the one in the Church of England : the other in the Church of Scotland. The practical bearing on the working clergy is much the same. Any faithful and wise parish clergyman is permitted to work his parish in his own way, no man interfering with him. A good man is trusted : as a good man ought to be. There is no nagging interference in either National Church. The beneficed clergy in either country are, generally speaking, entirely content with the rule under which they live. And I suppose there is no better account of the law, than that it hardly ever needs to be called into exercise.

Under Presbytery, there is no hierarchy. All the parochial clergy are, in theory, equal. The differences

which arise in authority and influence are purely personal, and do not come of their office. It is an essentially democratic or republican system. The priesthood consists of two orders : ministers and elders. In theory, both these are presbyters, with no priestly claims. In practice the elders are laymen, the ministers clergymen. Both are ordained : but the clergy alone by the laying on of the hands of other clergymen. If you wish to know how little effect theory has upon practice, you may survey the Scotch Church. You will find among its clergy just as High Churchmen as you will find anywhere : men who attach just as much importance as any to their orders, their succession, their sacraments, their sacred buildings. Of course there are Low Churchmen too : and a small school of Broad Churchmen, able and growingly influential. The benefices are on a scale of modest equality : there are no great prizes. And there is no higher dignity than that of parish clergyman. The Principals of universities, if clergymen, are by courtesy addressed as *The Very Reverend*. But they have no right to the distinction ; and precise people do not give it to them. The degree of Doctor of Divinity is not recognised by the Church as giving any precedence. All presbyters, in fact, are equal. And the incumbents of a number of adjacent parishes, marked out by law, meeting at stated intervals, form the court called a Presbytery : which has large powers over its clerical members. An appeal lies from the Presbytery

to the Synod, which is an aggregate meeting of several Presbyteries : and from the Synod to the General Assembly. This court meets once a year for about ten days. Its powers are both legislative and judicial : and in spiritual matters, its decision is final. It consists of a certain number of clergy and lay elders sent by each Presbytery : likewise of representatives of the universities and royal burghs throughout Scotland. Its members number about four hundred.

Under Episcopacy there is gradation in dignity and authority : there are the three orders of bishops, priests, and deacons. Virtually there are but two orders, bishops and priests : the diaconate being simply an introductory step to the priesthood. The bishops are selected by the prime minister : in the main, well selected. In recent years, they have all but invariably been men of high mark and character : devout, able, wise. They are the spiritual progenitors of the Church : ordination, though shared in by presbyters, is not valid unless presided over by a bishop. They have certain limited legal powers of exercising discipline : these powers cannot be used, in many cases, unless at a very great cost in money. The bishops have large incomes, and high rank : they are clergymen, but they rank on equal terms with the nobility. And under them, but elevated among the parochial clergy, are deans and canons, archdeacons and rural deans.

Which of these two systems is better? The

republican, with its equality: or the hierarchical, with its gradations? Let one, in this unpractical reverie, put away, for the moment, all prepossession; and be absolutely free.

But better for whom?

For the individual clergyman, I should unhesitatingly say Presbytery. If you cannot make all positions in the Church prizes: if prizes are rare, and growing rarer; a wise man will give up his hope of a great prize, for the assurance of a decent competency. If you go into a profession which has great prizes, and don't get one, you go through life with the disheartening sense that you are a failure. If you don't feel this, your wife and children will. Some will fancy that the reason why you did not get a prize, was that you did not deserve one. You know (of course) that this is not the case: but a cross-influence is exerted on all your doings by your sense that those around you think so. Then the absence of the great prizes of the Episcopal system cuts off the temptation to dishonestly trim, and hedge, and conceal one's convictions, and turn one's coat. It is good for a man to know that he has fairly got to the end of his tether, and that now all that remains for him is diligently to do his duty. It is a wretched thing, a sore temptation, a breaking strain on some men's honesty, to be always having an eye to preferment. Now, if there be no preferment, you cannot be having an eye to it. And though it must be very pleasant

The Ideal of a National Church. 313

to be a bishop, specially at first, it is not pleasant to find yourself under an old fellow-student, not a whit wiser, cleverer, or better than yourself, only a great deal more lucky.

But for the Institution, for the Church, for the maintenance of its worldly dignity, worldly wisdom would say that Episcopacy is beyond all question the better. The actual work of governing will be done by each form with fair equality : there is not much to choose between them. But if you refuse to think of the sufferings, sorrows, and disappointments of the individual clergyman, and think only of the worldly glory and standing of the Church, you will declare for Episcopacy. For you will attract men of greater talent, and higher social standing, to the clerical office. They will come, hoping to draw prizes. They will probably draw blanks : but then they are in and cannot get out : and the institution gets the good of their services. And then, in a hierarchical church, you are not sure, till you die, but what you may get a prize after all. Not so many years ago, we saw an eminent man, long passed by, made a bishop at the age of seventy. Of course, it was a great shame : but still it was done. Not but the good man deserved the dignity : but he was past : it was too late. However, there he is, and his grandchildren will be able to say that he was a bishop. We must, in considering the matter, remember that the inhabitants of Great Britain are, for the most part,

much impressed by worldly station. They reverence a dignity : a bishop is a dignity : and if the right man, he deserves to be so esteemed. It has happened, doubtless, that the fourpenny piece has now and then managed somehow to get itself stamped as a sovereign : and it passes as such. An archbishop takes precedence of a duke. Such a man as Chalmers, albeit greater than half a dozen eighteenth-century archbishops rolled into one, is yet, through lack of social prestige, liable to be patronised by a squire, or a member of parliament, or a small peer ; but men and women, old and young, bow humbly to the archbishop, *His Grace*. And from the commonplace mortal, thus invested with a halo of glory, a dignity is reflected on the humblest cleric or layman in his communion. Seldom have I witnessed greater elation, than in a distinctly vulgar person relating that the Bishop of Beverley preached to him last Sunday : unless indeed in a silly woman relating how his lordship put on his lawn sleeves in her parlour. Even the bishop of an unendowed church, though poorly paid and without legal precedence, ranks very differently from an ordinary dissenting minister. The honoured name of the office has sometimes, as in the case of Bishop Wordsworth of St. Andrews, led men to accept it whose learning, devotion, and goodness marked them as worthy of the highest honour in any communion on earth.

A judicious defender of Episcopacy will not rest

the case for it on high grounds : anything but that. Let him make mention simply of the dignity that surrounds it in the eyes of a British generation. The biggest Presbyterian clergyman, Chalmers or Macleod, is a man for a country gentleman to honour by asking him to his house. He walks in to dinner behind the shabbiest honourable. The son of a decent shop-keeper, when made an archbishop, walks before a duke. Take any mortal, of good appearance and common sense : place him on that elevation, give him that rank and income, and most men and women will humbly bow to him. And in truth, the man is exceptional in his good luck, however commonplace in his nature. A National Church, without a hierarchy, cannot socially hold its place in an aristocratic country. So, in our Ideal National Church, let there be dignities, call them what you please. But it is just as well to use old familiar names. I did indeed once hear a great man say that it would remove the Scotch prejudice against Prelacy, if instead of calling a church ruler a Bishop, you called him a Colonel. But though a great man, he appeared crotchety in a high degree. Of late, indeed, one has heard eminent Scotch clerics say that it would be a good thing to have *Superintendents*. What are Superintendents but Bishops? Not but what there is something in a name. Grammatically, an *Inquisitor* is merely an Enquirer. And a *Grand Inquisitor* is of course a specially patient and successful Enquirer, whose enquiries have resulted in

great blessings to mankind, and in great enlightenment. Newton was a Grand Inquisitor : Spain never had a grander. And Bacon, in his most famous work, professes to point out the methods which a good Inquisitor should employ. As a *Pope*, too, means simply a Father, and the paternal affections were specially warm in Luther, it might be said of him, with incontrovertible truth, that this world has seldom seen a more decidedly Popish man.

You do not expect, I suppose, to find or invent in this world any system against which no objection can be made. Those familiar with Presbytery and Episcopacy respectively know that each has its crying evils. But it does not follow that a system is bad on the whole though it has crying evils. Its advantages may be much greater. It is an inconvenience that a locomotive engine should get so very hot ; but you do not propose to do away with locomotive engines. The disadvantages of Presbytery are those of parliamentary government ; of government by a parliament that meets rarely, and for short times. A vulgar blatant demagogue may get the ear of the General Assembly ; and have a certain weight, not for the value of the opinions he expresses, but for the fluency, brass, and loudness of voice with which he expresses opinions worth nothing. Not less disagreeable than the blatant demagogue is the artful dodger. There is no other word for the thing. A politic and artful clergyman ; a puller of wires, a manager of

committees, a getter of majorities, an earwigger of men in power ; in short, an ecclesiastical trickster ; however good his ends, I can regard with no feeling short of loathing. Yet Presbytery conduces to the development of such. As for Episcopacy, there may be the bishop governed by his wife or daughter : Sydney Smith knew of even a butler-bishop. And it is a sorry sight, the dropping-down-deadness of manner of some clerics before their diocesan. Apart from his dignity, he has so much to give away ! A poor man, with a large family, cannot but think how grand a thing it would be to have seven hundred and fifty pounds a year added to his income. And a bishop can sometimes make canons ; and often bestows livings, specially upon his sons-in-law.

My subject is to be handled briefly. But the conclusion of the whole matter is, that in the ideal National Church, there should be as little governing as possible, unless by appeal to that law of the land which is open to all ; and that what governing is needful is best exercised by a hierarchy. A republican church must lose in an aristocratic country. Unquestionably, a republican church is the more rational and defensible institution ; but in this very imperfect state, something must be yielded to the prejudices of poor humanity. We know the race. A certain number of clergymen, with incomes of from five to fifteen thousand a year, each living in a palace, and maintaining something

of baronial style, will make the institution more respected.

A wise and eloquent writer describes a certain parish clergyman as preaching to his parishioners with all the weight of a man who kept his carriage-and-pair. A poor incumbent, with a hundred a year, told me but yesterday, with manifest pride, that the new rector of a certain parish had seven thousand a year of private means. What was that to him? one thought; but plainly it was much to him. If a man arrives at the door of a country church to preach, having walked five miles on a hot summer day, dusty and deliquescent, no matter how able and eloquent he may be, he will be somewhat cheaply estimated by rich and poor in that congregation that day. If he drive up in a handsome trap, drawn by a pair of well-bred animals; if a staid and well-fed manservant carry the bag with his robes to the vestry; the weight of his good counsels is much increased. You may refer, no doubt, to the instance of the Apostles. But things are entirely changed since then.

You may fancy I am speaking cynically, and not in entire sincerity and good faith. I cannot help that. And I conclude what I have to say at present with an extract from a speech once made in the General Assembly by that great and good man, Chalmers. He never said anything in deeper earnest.

It is quite ridiculous to say that the worth of the clergy will suffice to keep them up in the estimation of society. This worth

must be combined with importance. Give both worth and importance to the same individual, and what are the terms employed in describing him? "A distinguished member of society, the ornament of a most respectable profession, the virtuous companion of the great, and a generous consolation to all the sickness and poverty around him." These, Moderator, appear to me to be the terms peculiarly descriptive of the appropriate character of a clergyman, and they serve to mark the place which he ought to occupy. But take away the importance, and leave only the worth, and what do you make of him?—what is the descriptive term applied to him now? Precisely the term which I often find applied to many of my brethren, and which galls me to the very bone every moment I hear it,—"*a fine body*;" a being whom you may like, but whom I defy you to esteem: a mere object of endearment: a being whom the great may at times honour with the condescension of a dinner, but whom they will never admit as a respectable addition to their society. Now all that I demand from the Court of Teinds is, to be raised, and that as speedily as possible, above the imputation of being "*a fine body*;" that they would add importance to my worth, and give splendour and efficacy to those exertions which have for their object the most exalted interests of the species.

That is sound sense: not the less sound that it is playfully expressed. Dignities and dignitaries are desirable things: it is amusing to see how, where they are forbidden, Nature asserts herself: and you find men called *Right Reverend* who have not the smallest claim to the designation. It matters little by what name a dignity is called. And it must have the backing of some measure of worldly wealth, if it is to hold its own. I have seen, at a quasi-public dinner North of the Tweed, the poorest squire care-

fully provided for at the high table : while a learned ecclesiastical dignitary, both personally and officially of as high place as we have, was left to struggle in with the ruck and to fight for sitting-room. This means a great deal. It is a trumpety straw : but it shows how a great wind is blowing. It is evil, where the Parson is In Contempt.

If some good men could take it in, it is wise to plead for a system on lowly grounds : specially when these are the only sound ones. There was no more eminent living Scotchman than one who once said to me (he was an elder of the Church), "If you plead for a Hierarchy on grounds of expediency ; its venerable associations, its social advantages in a country with great diversities of rank : I will take a Bishop to my arms to-morrow. *But*, if you tell me that Episcopacy is a vital thing, and that without it there is no Church, and there are no sacraments, I snap my fingers at you."

More might be said. If you look deeper into Presbytery and Episcopacy, you will see how very little difference there is between them. There are the three things about the Government of a Church : The conferring of orders : The maintenance of discipline : The keeping of worldly standing. We say no more of the third : as to the second, the systems are nearly equal : and as to orders, the question is of the narrowest. In both, there is the laying on of hands : In both, not less than three, already ordained, confer

full orders ; one of the three presiding. The entire question is : Will it suffice that he who presides be *primus inter pares*, set over the rest for that hour and that duty : or must he be always set over and set apart, as one of a different order ? That is all that keeps Presbytery and Prelacy apart, on the vital point. That is what keeps things so, that the two National Churches, menaced by the same enemies, instead of standing shoulder to shoulder, are deeply divided ; and (to say the truth), in Scotland, are hostile powers.

A very great ecclesiastic once said to the writer, "Is there no hope of their drawing nearer ? They will stand or fall together." But after a little thought, he added, "The practical difficulties are so great, that we can but wait God's will."

One thing only I am sure of. If these difficulties are to be accommodated, it must be done by devout men, with souls unspoiled by Controversy, and lifted up by Prayer. Otherwise, it will never be done at all. And then, existing difficulties will be removed by the coming of a Change, which the writer hopes he may not live to see.



CONCLUSION.



TRIED and burdened people,—and all people I know are tried and burdened,—must, if they are to live to any length of years, devise or discover some method of habitually *Getting Away*.

They must find a Retreat into which they may flee, and be delivered from the burdens and cares of their life for some little while. I do not mean *Getting Away* in space. That will not (of necessity) much help you. I mean Moral and Spiritual *Getting Away*. Idiotic advisers (including some physicians who pretend to minister to the mind diseased) fail to see that the only sufficient *Getting Away* is the moral and spiritual. They send the poor man abroad: but however far he may go, he has not in the least degree *Got Away*. There is the desolation of the stranger in a strange land: but the inner atmosphere of anxiety and care still surrounds him: and amid unfamiliar and unhomelike scenes the broken-hearted brain-worker dies.

It is a need, pressing as any after food and shelter, that we find, somewhere, a Retreat, into which we may get apart from the daily burden, care, worry, gossip, strife; those things which make life so sordid and poor a thing to very many. We could not bear to be always thinking and thinking of ourselves, our troubles and our failures. We must somehow Get Away from these.

The thing can be done. There are divers fashions in which a tried mortal may Get Away.

Some Get Away by means which are such in their nature that the poor soul comes back from its Retreat weaker and worse, to find the burden heavier and more killing. There is an awful Agent which in all countries, and from the earliest ages, human beings have found the way to draw forth from things which grow out of the earth: Its name is Alcohol. It is able, for a little while, to deliver a tried mortal from all his cares. But it leaves him, from the earliest use of it, a hundred times worse than it found him. Gradually, a thousand times worse, a hundred thousand times worse, a million times worse, both in actual Misery, and in Degradation beneath humanity. It is startling, when you find out how many human beings, in these over-driven days, do virtually take to this special Retreat. The writer, and many placed as he is, have sorrowful opportunity of knowing that this is so. This Means is always ready. In the beginning, it is perfectly effectual. It can thoroughly

Take Away. Not merely can it make the solitary sufferer who applies to it entirely unaware of all the troubles which surround him. When used in certain surroundings of social exhilaration, it appears to lift him above all these. A sad genius, who spoke from some experience of this Retreat, wrote of it in triumphant strain :

The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam didna mind the storm a whistle.
Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drowned himsel' amang the nappy :
Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills of life victorious !

No doubt the man who wrote the lines was a great poet. But how did Tam feel when the transient and morbid exhilaration had gone? How did he feel the next morning? And was he really victorious over all ills; or only drugged into forgetfulness, with a wretched semi-consciousness all the while that things were far wrong?

Some Get Away from surrounding troubles by Work: hard and wholesome work. For such work engages and engrosses the mind: puts it upon the stretch: achieves something worth the doing. And you come back from this Retreat with the sense that you have done Right, and you find the burden lighter. There is the difference between a worthy and unworthy fashion of Getting Away: the difference between a healthy and a morbid fashion of

finding a Retreat. There is the unspeakable and eternal difference between Right and Wrong.

Not but that there are divers ways of using the great resort of Work. A certain great man's plan of escaping the perplexities and miseries of this world came virtually to this: that we should work so hard that there should be no time to think of them. Practically, this is Tam o' Shanter back again: though the means to be used be healthier. And, doubtless, there are those who are afraid to have a quiet Think, either of their own concerns or of God's Universe and its Management. But far better than mere forgetfulness of sorrow and strife, it is to be lifted above these. I think of that dear and good man, the sweetest of recent lyric poets, a saintly and gentle soul, to whom was appointed the heavy trial of living amid Scotch ecclesiastical strife, the bitterest and worst of all: but who was helped to find a Retreat from it all:

In days of public strife, when, sharp and stinging,
The angry words went daily to and fro,
Friend against friend the polished missiles flinging,
Each seeking who could launch the keenest blow,
I went to thee, my harp, and bade thy numbers flow.

Into those pages peace-thoughts weave their brightness;
The peace that has been, is, and is to be,
Is here; peace-blossoms in their tranquil whiteness
I've shaken, as I passed from tree to tree,
Relics of many a strange and broken history.

Truly it is a great thing to reach (even for a little while) an elevation where we do not forget the troubles, but remember them and feel that they have no power at all to distress or fever. Now and then, helped by a Help which is above our giving to one another, you have been able to think of things which commonly irritate, and to feel that they do not irritate at all : of things which vexed you sorely, and to feel that they do not vex at all. As plain and sober fact, with nothing high-flown about it, the aids and consolations of Religion have many times lifted you up to this. It was being on the mountain-top, with the clouds far below. If we could make of it all we might, and what some have in fact made of it, here is the supreme help and comfort of the recurring Lord's-Day. It has been found a weekly Retreat by many. Worldly cares either could not follow them at all ; or were remembered calmly without having the least power to sting.

Many manage to Get Away (more or less successfully) by Reading. I do not mean the hard reading, implying great effort, to which the poor man in Borrow's story took "to keep the misery out of his head." That is to be classed under the head of Work. I mean the reading which entertains and interests, and which at the same time lifts you into a better and healthier atmosphere than that of your own concerns. The day was, in which works of Fiction enabled many tried folk to Get Away. It was a salutary relief. For

the time, the sorrowful facts of life, sickness and worry and disappointment and care, were forgotten. This Retreat is not so available now. Once fiction rapt you away into romantic and heroic tracts, quite out of ordinary life. You were interested and engrossed even: but there was no spiritual wear, no call upon your sympathies. It was indeed a release from daily troubles. But now, the greatest works of fiction sometimes keep you in a gray atmosphere of care and disappointment. They are very fine, but very painful reading: possibly they so handle you as to make your own trials more vividly remembered, more keenly and bitterly felt. Let the writer confess, for himself, that he dares not read a good novel now. The last he read was *Middlemarch*. It was a wonderful work of genius: but it was most depressing. You may just as well go to the Book of Ecclesiastes at once. And it is for profit, not for pleasure, one reads Ecclesiastes. But it is for pleasure rather than for profit one reads a story. Doubtless, to have your heart touched and warmed is all very well. But to have the most painful and jarring facts and truths pressed upon one from first to last, is not what some readers want when they open a work of fiction.

Some people who do not read much, and specially who never read dramatic literature, find a relief akin to that which the drama yields, in continual gossip about their neighbours, and the concerns of their neighbours. Virtually, they convert the lives of their

neighbours into a dramatic performance, constantly going on before them. They picture looks, words, feelings. The thing becomes substantially a Play: and it relieves the onlookers for the while from the burden of their own concerns. It is a humbler Dream-life, without sentiment.

The aim of this modest volume has been to provide some little relief for some tried souls, not by forgetting the facts of life, but by facing them and trying to make them look more cheering. The writer and the reader of these pages have not been seeking a retreat in oblivion of the many trials of their life: the many things which lie heavy on us. We are not content to look another way, and plod on our journey, ignoring heavy steps which we hear coming after us. It is better to turn full upon whatever is there: to meet it face to face: to scan it from head to foot. It may prove not to be so killing, after all. A vague fear is ever more dreadful than a clearly-defined fear. Let us know the worst of our worst troubles. Doubtless the writer, here, has the advantage of his readers. For the effort of writing provides a retreat wherein we are very free from troubles which would get at us in vacancy. I shall not soon forget how touching it was when a dear young friend, early tried as few are, told me that the special work of writing enabled him to keep overwhelming remembrances *at a bearable distance*. And in writing concerning human sorrows, it is not merely that one gets away, as one gets away

by the aid of any hard work. There is a farther relief. By describing a worry, it is lightened. By anatomising one's state of feeling under it, the painful feeling is made tolerable. The worry recurs; and it is bad enough. But there is a certain curious satisfaction in finding that the feeling is so exactly what one had described it. The worry, being delineated, has become a subject of art. And the picture of a disagreeable sight is pleasant to look on, many times.

THE END.

$\frac{1}{2}$
20

1/6

22
29

